

TOM FRANK'S THE WRECKING CREW • BUSH'S HIDDEN LEGACY

SEPTEMBER 2008

IN THESE TIMES

Shocking and **awful**:
McCain and vets

Your flat-screen **TV's**
greenhouse gas



MOVING OBAMA LEFT

DAVID MOBERG REPORTS

PLUS:

Helen Benedict on
why so many soldiers rape

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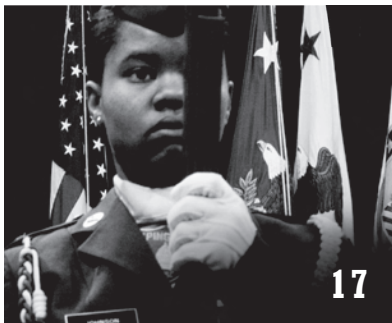
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editorial

Keep the Heat on Obama

IN 1992, WHEN Bill Clinton won the Democratic nomination, Washington progressives—the leaders of unions, think tanks and advocacy groups—fell over themselves to rally around the man from Hope. Part of this support was, no doubt, to make sure that he got elected—after 12 dark years of Presidents Reagan and Bush.

Washington's notable liberals also decided to act as FOBs (Friends of Bill) so as to ingratiate themselves to the future administration. Once at the left hand of power, the reasoning went, they could use their influence for good.

So the progressive community closed ranks around their “friend”—or the man who was a friend of their friends. Friends like Derek Shearer, an *In These Times* founding sponsor, who, with Martin Carnoy, re-branded democratic socialism in the 1980 book *Economic Democracy*.

Shearer, an FOB, was a living testament to Clinton's progressive bona fides. The two were roommates at Oxford, where Clinton protested the Vietnam War.

After serving Clinton in obscurity as an undersecretary of commerce, Shearer later represented the aspirations of the left wing of the party as ambassador to Finland. Progressives were out in the cold.

You can see the same thing happening today with Sen. Barack Obama, as liberal worthies in Washington rush to lend him uncritical support, somehow forgetting that politics is about exercising power, not cultivating friends.

For example, Robert Borosage, co-director of Campaign for America's Future, tells us that Obama has “always been a cautious liberal.” In other words, forget the Obama who earlier in his career supported single-payer universal healthcare, addressed an early anti-Iraq War rally and spoke at a forum sponsored by the Young Democratic Socialists of America from the University of Chicago.

Intentionally or not, this diminishing of expectations takes the heat off candidate Obama. A left that expects nothing from Obama will demand nothing—and a left that demands nothing from Obama will get nothing.

These Friends of Obama who apologize for his every rightward deviation also have their radical counterparts—the chronically disgruntled who eschew Democratic Party politics, invoke an ever-elusive “people's power” and dismiss Obama in the spirit of knowing cynicism.

Those two opposite reactions are similar in that neither puts pressure on Obama. Both views assume that progressives have no role in history; we are either sidelined cheerleaders (résumés in hand) or radical puritans who won't deign to engage on the corruptible plane of real world politics.

Such defeatist thinking does not give credit to either Obama supporters or the candidate himself.

On Jan. 15, during a primary debate in South Carolina, CNN's Wolf Blitzer asked the candidates, “If Dr. Martin Luther King were alive today, why should he endorse you?” Obama, the one-time community organizer, replied: “Well, I don't think Dr. King would endorse any of us. I think what he would call on the American people to do is to hold us accountable. ... I believe change does not happen from the top down; it happens from the bottom up.”

The senator from Illinois has an understanding of how politics works that escapes his slavish supporters and jaded critics. In that, he is like Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who once told an adviser after listening to a well-reasoned proposal: “Well, you've convinced me. Now go out and find me a constituency to make me do it.”

Our job is not to convince Obama to govern progressively, but to build the constituency that will *make* him do so.

—Joel Bleifuss

IN THESE TIMES

“With liberty and justice for all...”

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mixed reaction

JUST THE FACTS



800,000 Number of students China trained to clap and cheer in unison in preparation for the Olympic games.

380 Number of "Olympic hostesses" who were taught greeting skills, such as smiling.

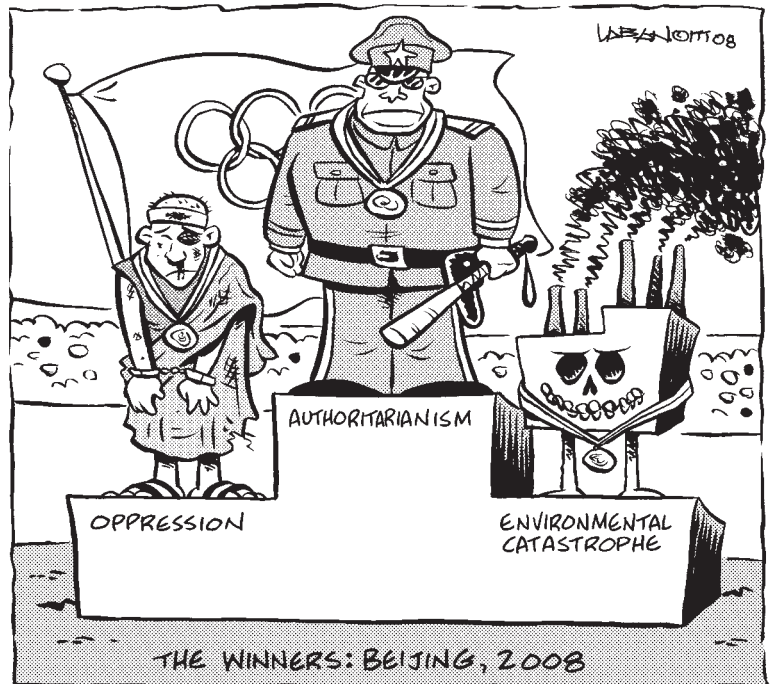
6 Minimum number of teeth such hostesses' smiles must always bear.

10 Minimum duration, in minutes, for which such smiles must be unflinchingly maintained.

“When people ask me, ‘Why can’t labor organize the way it did in the ‘30s?’ The answer is simple: Everything we did then is now illegal.”

— THOMAS GEOGHEGAN, CHICAGO LABOR LEADER AND ATTORNEY

LABANARAMA BY TERRY LABAN



QUID PRO QUO

THE QUID:

How much money does it cost to take a turn at the wheel of the Straight Talk Express? About \$285,00.

That was the amount of funds raised at a June 10 New York City bash thrown by John Hess (a top executive at the oil company, Hess Corp.) on behalf of the Republican National Committee and the über-mavericky Sen. John McCain.

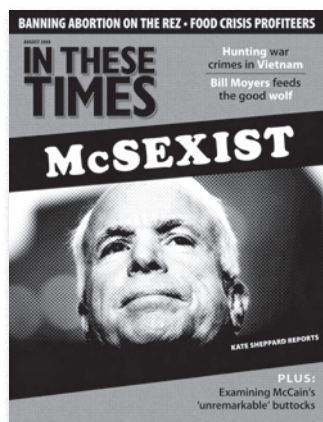
THE QUO:

A week later, McCain traveled to Texas, where he came to his senses, reversed his previous position and courageously announced his support for oil drilling offshore. And if you think there’s any connection between the fundraiser, McCain’s policy change and the fact that Hess Corp. has major exploration and refinery operations in the Gulf of Mexico, let the McCain campaign set you straight:



“Mr. Hess was fundraising before Sen. McCain made the announcement,” a McCain spokesman explained to the *Los Angeles Times* on Aug. 5.

letters



Don't forget McKinney

Thanks for Kate Sheppard's excellent article ("McSexist," August), but I have one criticism: She is dead wrong when she says "a woman candidate won't be on the ballot in November." In fact, the Green Party is running women for president *and* vice president.

I know what she means, but that is the problem. I don't subscribe to *In These Times* to have it ignore and marginalize voices to the left of the Democratic Party, whose main role in our bought-and-sold "democracy" is to channel and co-opt dissent before it becomes a threat to the status quo.

I ask that in future issues you not only acknowledge progressive third-party candidates, but actually offer the Cynthia McKinney/Rosa Clemente ticket as a real option to those voters who want to vote for a woman. This will give them a double opportunity.

Charlie Hinton
San Francisco

McCain Family Values

Thanks to Kate Sheppard for her excellent article on women's issues and John McCain. But I think she forgot an important point. After McCain came back from the Vietnam War, he left his first wife and went looking for a second. He found Cindy, a pretty girl almost 20 years younger and who was very rich. Now he has a nice jet that belongs to Cindy, carrying him around on his campaign.

The names we call things influence how others feel about them, and the right wing is adept at coining positive-sounding labels for their ideas.

Are these the family values McCain talks about? I wonder what he will do when Cindy gets old and not as pretty. He has already complained about her makeup.

Carole Pelton
Via E-mail

Withhold the vote

After James Thindwa wrote a nice list of Barack Obama's many recent shortcomings in "Holding Barack Accountable" (Editorial, August), Thindwa offered no advice on just how we are to achieve this end.

I offer what should have been the final paragraph of that piece:

"Progressives should let it be known that if Obama continues to run to the right, we will do what many of our more committed brothers and sisters have already

decided to do and vote for Green Party nominee Cynthia McKinney or independent Ralph Nader."

The Democratic Party's recent history of failing to protect our liberties will not pass without consequences. Should it continue down this path, voters ought to abandon them and support real progressives for national office.

Democrats will never change so long as we continue to give them the only thing

they need from us—our votes.

Mark D. Bolton
Via E-mail

Pro-words

Reading Michelle Chen's "Poison Pill Slipped Into Indian Health Bill" (August), I was surprised to see Sen. David Vitter's (R-La.) addition called a "pro-life amendment." The right term for it, of course, is "anti-abortion."

The names we call things influence how others feel about them, and the right wing is adept at coining positive-sounding labels for their ideas and programs. Progressives should not help them out by adopting their deceptive language.

Let's always speak of "anti-abortion" rather than "pro-life," and "military" rather than "defense" spending. Those terms are not pejorative, simply more accurate.

John Lamperti
Via E-mail

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➤ Senior Editor David Sirota and *In These Times* editors will blog throughout the presidential conventions, so be sure to stop by www.TheIttList.com for commentary that goes beyond the TV hoopla.

➤ On Aug. 23, Senior Editor Laura Washington will commemorate the 40th anniversary of Chicago's 1968 Democratic National Convention with a Web-only article.

➤ And keep an eye out for InTheseTimes.com's newest columnist, Megan Tady, who in August will be highlighting the push to make the FCC dedicate 'white space' spectrum to wireless broadband.



contributors

Dear Reader,

I recently wrote letters to 2,014 of you who have contributed to this magazine's operations since January 2007. To the 176 who responded, thank you!

As I noted in that letter, subscription numbers are up. But subscription revenue covers only 30 percent of our annual budget. The rest must come from members of the *In These Times* community like you. And this year, we—like much of America—have been suffering the Bush recession, with income from donations down compared to a year ago.

Here is the good news: As the Bush era winds to an end, progressives are speaking with confidence about the prospects for change. *In These Times* will play its role in holding our friend from Chicago accountable. If progressive ideals and goals are to be realized, those who can afford to give must help fund media institutions like *In These Times*.

We need your support. The situation is urgent. Please take a moment and fill out the enclosed donation card.

On behalf of the *In These Times* community, thank you for your help during this time of serious financial need.

In solidarity,



Joel Bleifuss
Editor & Publisher



HELEN BENEDICT, a professor of journalism at Columbia University, is author of several books concerning social justice and women. Her writings on women soldiers won the James Aronson Award for Social Justice Journalism in 2008.



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JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES

Many local GOP officials are citing their party's increasingly conservative views on social issues—such as abortion rights, stem-cell research and same-sex marriage—as reasons for defecting.

Jumping Ship

Citing social issues, local GOP officials are abandoning their party in droves

BY HANS JOHNSON

A WAVE OF GOP STATE legislators and other officials is defecting from the Republican Party, exposing the role that an increasingly hard line on social issues may be playing in driving out moderates. The departures weaken the GOP as it confronts another challenging election.

"I don't think Ronald Reagan would recognize the party anymore," Wisconsin state Rep. Jeff Wood told the *Chippewa Herald* on July 8.

Wood announced he was leaving the Republicans to become an independent. In a closely divided state—where each of the major parties narrowly controls one chamber—Wood's switch underscores widespread concern over conservatives'

embrace of big government on issues such as war spending and eavesdropping.

"The party continues to try to prove Ben Franklin wrong, trying to buy security by sacrificing liberty," Wood said.

Others who are leaving the GOP in states essential to Republican electoral strategies are even announcing as Democrats.

"I am not leaving the Republican Party as much as I believe the Republican Party left me," four-term Colorado state Rep. Debbie Stafford told the Associated Press.

To welcome Stafford into their ranks, state Democrats recently gave her a jersey bearing the number "40." That is the number of seats her caucus-mates now hold in the state House, where they command a once-unthinkable 40-25 margin

over minority Republicans.

In Missouri—the state in which presidential outcome most reliably mirrors the national result—a former Republican and state senator, Chris Koster, said Republicans have misread the politics of abortion and biotechnology. The party's rigid rejection of research opportunities inherent in stem cells and threats by ideologues to punish scientists who disobey them badly hurt the state's image.

"Go to Boston for your Nobel Prize; come to Missouri for your leg irons," Koster joked during the press conference announcing his switch.

Koster recently won a competitive Democratic primary for state attorney general. Chris Benjamin, who vied to replace Koster in his 31st District senate seat, also switched parties early this year to become a Democrat.

The trend extends to Republicans in once reliably "red zones"—or GOP-leaning areas—in predominantly Democratic states. Local leaders are rethinking their allegiance and changing their party affiliation. In at least three cases, party-switchers in these once-conservative suburban regions have cited right-wing attacks against abortion and gay rights as major motivations for their change.

"You find yourself, over time, on many issues, being more aligned with Democrats," said Edina, Minn., Mayor James Hovland to the website MinnesotaMonitor.com. "And you start thinking, 'This is where I belong.'"

Early this year, Hovland announced and then withdrew from a run as a Democrat for the state's 3rd District seat in the U.S. Congress. He said he does not rule out later runs for higher office.

The current administration undid his identification with the GOP. Hovland not only voted for Bush in 2000, he said, but also attended Bush's first inauguration.

Hovland said he favors *Roe v. Wade* and opposed Republicans' failed drives—at both the state and federal level—to pass constitutional amendments banning civil marriage for same-sex couples.

In New York state, at least one Republican from Westchester County has been on the GOP ticket every statewide election for the past 50 years. But it is a red zone no more. One of the county's last Republicans recently changed parties.

"The main reason I left was the agenda and issues of the Republicans in Washington have been destroying the Republican Party," state Rep. Mike Spano told *City Hall News*, a monthly newsletter.

Spano cited a backlash against the GOP's attacks on same-sex marriage and said the issue may have hurt his brother, a Republican, who in 2006 lost a close race for reelection to a state senate seat in New York.

In another suburban Republican stronghold, Washington state Rep. Fred Jarrett, who represents Mercer Island, east of Seattle, announced a switch that caught his party off guard.

"What I've been doing as long as I've been in the legislature is trying to articulate that moderate Republican ... viewpoint," Jarrett told the *Seattle Times* in late 2007. "What I found is I may have a lot of ego, but I don't think I have enough

ego to think anymore that I can do it."

Jarrett said that the final nudge for his switch was Republicans' hard line against abortion. "My district is 70 percent pro-choice," he said. "How could I represent my district and tone down a record that I've had that has always been pro-choice?"

At their September convention, Republicans will likely downplay the divisive party platform and the attacks on abortion and gay rights that define the party's direct-mail appeals for dollars and votes.

For an increasing number of formerly GOP office-holders, such maneuvers are beside the point. The orthodoxy of party colleagues and the severity of the party line have driven them overboard.

Because party switches can be an early indicator of results in the next election, the GOP in several areas may soon be losing more officials than those who have lately jumped ship. ■

HANS JOHNSON, a contributing editor of *In These Times*, is president of *Progressive Victory*, based in Washington, D.C., and writes on labor, religion and the mechanics of political campaigns.

Bulldozed in Bethlehem

WEST BANK—THE SALIM family lives in a rural area with steep hills and long views—including views of the red roofs of nearby illegal Israeli settlements. Their home was built on what they thought was Bethlehem municipality, in the occupied West Bank. That is, until late 2005, when Israeli authorities informed them that they were living in "Jerusalem" without a permit for their house.

"My father went to the court more than 10 times," says Al-muatasim Salim, the eldest of three brothers. "They told him, 'You are building your house on the borders of Jerusalem municipality, and this area does not belong to Bethlehem.' They sent us an order [saying] that they will demolish the house within 24 hours."

After a three-month delay, the Israeli military arrived at dawn in January 2006, while the family slept. "We woke up to the sound of bulldozers," Al-muatasim says. "They came and, in less than 15

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LET THERE BE LIGHTS

When Patrick Delaney volunteered in 2006 in the northern Nicaraguan countryside—where more than 80 percent of the population has no access to electricity—he witnessed how the lack of light at night can paralyze communities.

“[Y]ou can’t read if you don’t have light,” Delaney says. “You can’t [afford] light if you don’t have an education.”

In less than six months, Delaney returned to the region as part of Bright New Ideas, a nonprofit he founded in 2006 to bring solar-powered lights to rural communities at low cost.

He says most Nicaraguans rely on kerosene lighting that produces dangerous fumes and is becoming more expensive with the rising price of gas.

Bright New Ideas helps educate communities about solar power and the value of choosing lasting products over those cheaply produced. The organization took newly improved lamps when it visited the country again in March 2008.

In July, after reaching a donation goal of \$5,000 to provide lamps for 100 families, Delaney says the next aim is to provide 10,000 cost-effective lamps to Nicaraguan residents by next year.

Visit www.BrightNewIdeas.org to donate and read about its progress.

—Justine Reisinger



minutes, they demolish the whole house.” The family was ordered to pay a fine of 70,000 shekels (about \$20,000) because they had built what Israel says was an “illegal” house.

An Israeli official told Al-muatasim that some of the money was going to the contractor who demolished the house. “They want us to pay the money for the demolition,” he says. In fact, Israeli law allows Palestinian families to be charged for demolitions of their own house, but that hasn’t always been enforced, according to Jeff Halper, an American-born Israeli who founded the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD).

Neighbors helped the Salims rebuild their home, next to the rubble pile of their original home. But less than a year later, in December 2006, the bulldozers returned and demolished the second house.

In late May, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert announced that Israel plans to build 1,460 new housing units in the West Bank in what it calls the ever-expanding “Jerusalem.” The government claims it can do this while pursuing a peace agreement with the Palestinians because these units will be added to existing settlements that it plans to keep in any future agreement.

But the Palestinian Authority claims Israel is endangering peace talks. The Israeli government also recently announced the construction of 884 new units for Jewish settlers within Palestinian East Jerusalem.

Halper says Israel has destroyed almost 19,000 Palestinian homes since the 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza began, including homes in East Jerusalem. But he also estimates that Palestinians themselves have demolished an equal number of homes because, if they do, “the Israelis cut the fine in half,” he says.

Since last fall’s Annapolis, Md., meeting that attempted to restart the peace process, Halper says Israel has announced the construction of 7,000 new units in existing settlement blocs, which make up at least 20 percent of the West Bank.

Hagit Ofra, coordinator of the Settlement Watch Project for Peace Now, an Israeli peace group, says 120 Israeli settlements and 100 smaller “outposts”—all illegal under international law—currently occupy the West Bank. That translates



Al-muatasim Salim stands next to a pile of rubble, directly outside his family’s new home.

into 275,000 Israeli residents. What’s more, 179,000 Israelis have settled in 12 neighborhoods in Palestinian East Jerusalem.

Any peace agreement, Ofra says, will involve swapping land between Israel and the West Bank. She adds, “The majority of settlements will be dismantled, but the majority of settlers will stay at home [in the West Bank] because the big settlements are closest to Jerusalem.”

With the help of international volunteers from ICAHD, the Salims rebuilt again, albeit a smaller, concrete block house, with two bedrooms, a living room and a kitchen. They’ve lived there for a year, but Al-muatasim says he expects the bulldozers will be back. “This is not the plan just for my family, but for the whole village,” he says, noting that about 50 other families in the village of Walaje have also lost their homes at least once since the Israeli government declared them illegal. (Comment requests from Israel’s Civil Administration of Judea and Samaria—what Israel calls the West Bank—were not returned.)

After the first demolition, the Red Cross gave the Salim family a tent, where they lived for two to three months.

“It was winter,” Seham, the family’s mother, recalls. Her youngest son, Mohammed, was 12 at the time, and taking his mid-term exams. “He didn’t do good that year,” she says, “and he still suffers now.” She says he has nightmares and is always asking if their new house will remain standing for long: “I don’t know, I tell him. I hope so.”

—Melinda Tuhus

Greens Not Turning Blue

FARHEEN HAKEEM KNEW she was doing something right when local Democrats came calling.

In 2006, on the heels of a failed run as a Green Party candidate for mayor of Minneapolis, Hakeem ran for commissioner of Minnesota's Hennepin County board. Although she lost to long-time Democratic-machine candidate Peter McLaughlin, she earned 33 percent of the vote.

Democrats took notice. Hakeem received e-mails and phone calls from local Democratic Party activists who were impressed with her skills as a grassroots campaigner. And when Minnesota state Rep. Neva Walker announced she would not be seeking re-election this year, local Democrats urged Hakeem to run for the seat as one of them.

Hakeem declined, deciding instead to enter the race as a Green.

"[The Greens] may be disorganized, but at least I'm not held accountable to any corporate party," she says. "They're not going to be asking me to do something I'm not interested in doing."

She says Democrats on the county board bowed to party pressure in 2006 by approving a new sales tax and hundreds of millions of dollars to fund a Major League Baseball stadium—without the referendum required by law.

Hakeem, an activist and community organizer who works with the Girl Scouts of America organizing young Muslim girls, wears the traditional Islamic headscarf—or *hijab*—and is wary of letting the Democratic Party capitalize on her likeness.

"Currently, our United States government is bombing people [who] look like me," she says. "I don't want them using my image ... [and then] say, 'Get out of Iraq!' but continue to fund it."

Hakeem is one of hundreds of Greens running for local, state and national offices this year. In July, many of them attended the party's national convention in Chicago. A common theme among the attendees was the belief that the Democratic Party is falling short on vital issues.

In Virginia, Jesse Johnson is running

for governor as a Green. He calls his Appalachian state "ground-zero for global climate change" because it's one of the country's major coal producers. The incumbent, Democratic Gov. Joe Manchin, supports mountaintop removal coal mining, a practice that alters landscapes and decimates natural environments. During his 2004 gubernatorial race, Manchin received \$571,214 in campaign contributions from coal industry interests.

What's more, Manchin is anti-abortion, anti-gun control, anti-marriage equality for same-sex couples, and pro-big business. In 2006, he had the state's welcome-sign slogan changed from "Welcome to West Virginia" to "Open for Business." Only after public outcry and a petition drive did Manchin agree to remove the new signs.

Green Party's Johnson says that West Virginia Democrats have no will to take on the coal industry.

"Any candidate who's going to bring true progressive values to the political system," he says, "is going to be stabbed in the back by the Democratic Party."

In Illinois, Rita Maniotis, an educator and activist, is a Green running for state representative. With the state's Democratic-controlled government currently discussing lifting its 21-year moratorium on the construction of new nuclear power plants, Maniotis is using her candidacy to inform residents of the health and environmental risks posed by such a move. She's also calling for a complete nuclear phase-out.

"The Democrats right now are using global warming as a cover to try to work nuclear power into the energy plan," she says. "[They're] selling out to the nuclear power industry and all the people [who] are going to make money off of this."

—Mark Berlin

Your Flat Screen Has (Greenhouse) Gas

VEGGING OUT in front of your flat-panel TV may pose more danger than turning your brain to mush.

A chemical used in the manufacturing of flat-screen televisions could rival some

of the world's most potent greenhouse gases in its harmful effects on the environment, according to a June study published in *Geophysical Research Letters*.

The production of nitrogen trifluoride, or NF_3 —used to produce flat-panel display screens—has increased over the past decade to meet the rising demand for consumer electronics like liquid crystal display (LCD) TVs. Global production of NF_3 now outstrips the 2005 emissions of synthetically produced greenhouse gases, such as perfluorocarbons (PFCs) and sulfur hexafluoride (SF_6), the report found.



This flat-screen TV offers a view of the wilderness that the production of a chemical in its screen helps destroy.

" NF_3 has a potential greenhouse impact larger than that of the industrialized nations' emissions of PFCs or SF_6 , or even that of the world's largest coal-fired power plants," write Michael Prather and Juno Hsu, the study's authors.

They call NF_3 the "missing greenhouse gas" because it's not covered under the Kyoto Protocol—the international agreement established to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. When the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change adopted the treaty in 1997, NF_3 was produced only in small quantities, primarily for rocket fuel and lasers.

The Kyoto Protocol—which the United States has not ratified—was based on data from 1995, and covers carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, the three major greenhouse gases attributed to human activities. But NF_3 's impact on global warming was not considered until the 2001 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the study says.

Prather and Hsu estimate that some 4,000 tons of NF_3 will be produced this year and that the amount could double by 2010 if companies like DuPont and Mitsui Chemicals expand production.

In November, industrial chemical manufacturer Air Products, the largest NF_3 producer, announced that it would ramp up its production in the United States and Asia.

Global shipments of LCD TVs are expected to nearly double, from about 100 million units in 2008 to almost 194 million units in 2012, according to market research firm iSuppli, which attributes that growth to falling prices and an increased demand for the high-definition display format.

Kert Davies, research director at Greenpeace International, says he's concerned that the switch from analog to digital television next February will catalyze an uptick in electronic waste as people discard their old TVs and simultaneously create a purchasing bubble for flat-panel TVs.

"Now that we're aware of global warming, we should not do anything to exacerbate it,"

Davies says. "For any of these manufacturing processes, there is also a safer alternative and that includes climate safety."

At a recent G-8 summit in Japan, President Bush and other leaders pledged to halve greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. But many environmental advocates—groups such as the National Resources Defense Council and the Sierra Club—say the pledge is vague and doesn't go far enough because no targets were set for the next decade. And a lot can happen in 10 years.

Despite the increased production of NF_3 over the past decade, documentation of its abundance in the atmosphere does not exist. Prather and Hsu's study warns that recording the impact is essential and that the list of greenhouse gases covered by Kyoto must be expanded during the second commitment period for the agreement, which is slated to begin in 2012.

" NF_3 triggers the radar that there may be other surprises coming in global warming," says Davies. "We must be vigilant about new industrial gases that contribute."

—Emily Udell

No Refuge from Iraq in Canada

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS FROM the U.S. military who are seeking refuge in Canada are rightly confused about the rules when it comes to being able to stay. The stories of Pfc. Robin Long and Pfc. Joshua Key won't clarify much but they do provide some clues.

Long and Key have much in common. Both joined the U.S. Army looking to better their lives; both deserted their posts and fled to Canada; both sought refugee status.

But Long, currently in custody at Fort Carlson military base in Colorado, is the first U.S. conscientious objector to be sent back from Canada, while Key sits at home in Saskatchewan, awaiting a new hearing on his claim for refugee status.

"It didn't sit right in my stomach," Long told the *Boise Weekly* in May 2006, about going to Iraq. "I morally couldn't do it."

Long, 25, fled to Canada in June 2005 after being ordered to Iraq earlier that

appall-o-meter

3.3 The Night Chicago Died

Once upon a time, the social universe of Chicago baseball fandom was fixed. Cubs fans were douchebags, and White Sox fans were dirtbags. Recent events in the remote Chicago exurb of Huntley, Ill., however, have shaken this cosmological certitude to its very foundations.

Consider the ordeal of Robert Steele, a quiet, hardworking young Sox fan who accompanied his fiancée to a birthday party at the home of Cubs fan Jaroslav "Jerry" Czaplá. According to the *Daily Herald*, Czaplá and his brother Boguslaw "Bob" Czaplá, along with their friend Maciej "Mike" Trojnar, began to tease Steele about the supposed periodontal deficiencies said to typify Sox fans. Steele and his fiancée made a move to leave—it was, after all, a Sesame Street-themed birthday party for a 2-year-old, and such provocations had no place. But the Cubs fans pleaded it was all in good fun and that Steele should stay.

This proved to be a blackguardly act of North Side treachery, as the Cubs fans soon reignited the quarrel. In short order,

they had Steele on the ground, where they set upon him with boot and fist, destroying his eye. Charges have been brought against the attackers, and a civil suit is sure to follow. But the damage to the Cubs' brand is unlikely to be undone.

3.8 Toto's Career Path

Human rights activists had reason to cheer about the recent conviction, in New York, of one of this hemisphere's most notorious death squad leaders. Emmanuel "Toto" Constant was the founder of the Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti (FRAPH), which is believed to have carried out thousands of murders in Haiti in the early '90s.

But Constant was convicted not of crimes against humanity but of mortgage fraud. Constant, who founded his death squad while on the CIA payroll, fled Haiti for the United States and eventually found work with the New Jersey-based mortgage bank D&M Financial, rising to the post of Suffolk County (N.Y.) branch manager. (One wonders just how he motivated employees). CNN reports that he faces 15 to 45 years in prison.

2.8 Does Real Estate Make You Stupid?

Now that the mother of all real estate busts is upon us, people all over the world are losing their shit. Exhibit A: Richard Ott, of Newark, Del. According to the *Wilming-ton (Del.) News Journal*, Ott had become rather exercised by the fact that the tenants of a house he owns were behind on their rent. So one night, he decided to crash his Hummer into the house.

The middle-aged tenants awoke to find Ott's headlights shining into the bedroom. After checking on the welfare of their son, they called 9-1-1. Ott, meanwhile, set about trying to kick in the front door. Before fleeing the scene, Ott yelled, "Tell the police it's the landlord that tore up the building."

Ott has been slapped with a raft of charges, including attempted burglary. Oddly enough, it was his parting words that led to his arrest. The tenants had never seen him before. Police picked him up at his house, a pine bough still wedged in the Hummer's front bumper.

—Dave Mulcahey

snapshot

year. He told the media and Canada's Federal Court that despite joining the Army at age 19 and planning on a career in the military, he decided, based on conversations with soldiers returning from Iraq, that "when these people came back and were telling these horrific stories and our superiors were egging people on, some people were actually volunteering to go over there and it just seemed like justified homicide. It didn't seem right to me."

Long argued that if Canada returned him to the United States, he would be subjected to cruel and unusual punishment and be denied justice.

On July 17—after hearings before a Refugee Determination Board and an unsuccessful appeal to the Federal Court in Vancouver—Canadian officials deported Long, handing him over to U.S. authorities in Washington state.

Key, 30, fled to Canada in March 2005 while on a two-week leave from a tour of duty in Iraq. He says he joined the military in 2002 in order to make a living and support his wife and children. In his autobiography, *A Deserter's Tale*, Key recounts that his recruiter promised him he wouldn't be sent to Iraq when he enlisted.

When he applied for refugee status, Key told the refugee board—according to transcripts used in the Federal Court appeal—that his role in Iraq was "to blow open the doors with explosives and then to assist in both securing the premises and detaining the adult male occupants."

Key also alleged during his hearing that "during these searches, he witnessed several instances of unjustified abuse, unwarranted detention, humiliation and looting by fellow soldiers, much of which he said was ignored by his superior officers."

Key argued that to be sent back to Iraq would mean being forced to commit war crimes. The refugee board rejected that assertion and denied his claim. But Canada's Federal Court ruled that while Key couldn't prove he was being ordered to commit war crimes, he could make a legitimate argument that he was being forced to violate the Geneva Conventions, and that alone could qualify him for refugee status.

Some observers in Canada, including Key's lawyer, Jeffery House—who himself fled to Canada in the '60s to escape the



Sudanese refugees from the five-year-old Darfur conflict watch President Omar al-Beshir during his trip to El-Fasher in north Darfur on July 23. Nine days earlier, the International Criminal Court accused Beshir of instructing his forces to annihilate three non-Arab groups in the region, masterminding murder, torture, pillaging and using rape to commit genocide. (Photo by Khaled Desouki/AFP/Getty Images)

Vietnam War—explain that a conscientious objector who has been in Iraq has a stronger case than one who leaves before serving in the war. In other words, being forced to participate in an unjust war is different from fearing that the U.S. justice system is flawed.

Says House: "The Key decision is of use to soldiers who have their boots on the ground and are ordered to commit acts [that] violate their consciences, and also violate international norms."

Canadian pollster Angus Reid recently found that 64 percent of Canadians want military deserters to be allowed to remain in Canada. In June, the Canadian Parliament passed a non-binding motion urging the government to follow the precedent set during the Vietnam War, when Canada allowed 50,000 draft resisters and conscientious objectors to settle there.

But the Conservative government, led by Prime Minister Stephen Harper, has rejected the parliamentary motion and ignored the poll numbers, arguing against a parallel between the Vietnam War and the Iraq

War because soldiers today are volunteers.

"People do not join with their eyes closed," Laurie Hawn, a Conservative member of Parliament and a former lieutenant colonel in the Canadian Air Force, said at a June 3 House of Commons debate. "If they do, then they have their own problems."

Roughly 200 U.S. war resisters in Canada are awaiting word on their applications for refugee status, and possibly twice as many are in hiding in the country, according to the War Resisters Support Campaign (WRSC), a group of former U.S. deserters who stayed in Canada even after the Carter administration granted them amnesty.

The WRSC is mounting a campaign throughout Canada to clarify the confusion left by the court rulings.

In a July 14 statement, Bob Ages, chair of Vancouver's WRSC, said: "We are calling on Canadians to take immediate action to tell the government that its attempts to overturn Canada's longstanding tradition of sanctuary will be met with challenges everywhere."

—Peter Kavanagh

BY SALIM MUWAKKIL

Getting Messy With Jesse Helps Obama



FIND IT HARD to believe that the Rev. Jesse Jackson was unaware the Fox News mic was hot on July 6 when he broadcast his figurative castration of Sen. Barack Obama for “talking down to black people ... telling niggers how to behave.” That particular critique of the Obama campaign had been echoing throughout much of the black community, particularly from activists.

Jackson’s public support for Obama’s presidential bid precluded him from openly expressing this critique, however, so he seemingly “leaked” it through a Fox microphone. The savvy Jackson, one of America’s most politically astute men, also understands his perverse value in this nation’s political calculus: what displeases him pleases much of white America.

For Jackson, it was a win-win: It solidified his activist credentials and aided the Obama campaign.

Avid Obama supporters are furious. And the corporate media are amplifying this tension to reinforce their notion that we are in the midst of a major shift in black America. Many media pundits claim we have arrived at a post-civil rights era embodied by Obama and bitterly resisted by the race-baiting Jackson. But they have it wrong.

The chagrin that many of Obama’s black supporters feel toward Jackson is not necessarily a rejection of the civil rights movement. Many African Americans are committed to the Obama campaign because of its historical significance. For them, the effort to elect a black president trumps all else. They contend that black Obama critics are raising issues that threaten to ruin this rare historical moment.

On the flip side, Obama’s black critics argue that such celebratory sentiments ignore the real costs of failing to demand accountability on issues of importance to African Americans. They see that failure in the way Obama panders to other constituencies but then patronizes the black base.

He told the NAACP, for example, “It doesn’t matter how much money we invest in our communities ... or how many government programs we launch—none of it will make any difference if we don’t seize more responsibility in our own lives.” Obama won much media praise for the hard-hitting “truths” of his message.

But Maulana Karenga—a Cal State-Long Beach professor, black nationalist theorist and creator of Kwanzaa—wrote in a July 17 column in the *Los Angeles Sentinel* that there was nothing “new, startling or worthy of refutation” in Obama’s moral message to the black community.

Moreover, Karenga asked, “If we are going to praise white Americans for their strengths, why come to black people preaching and prattling about weaknesses and offering a litany for lost souls?”

In his appearances before predominately black audiences, Obama laces his speeches with condescending language about the need for more individual responsibility. He omits this focus on collective behavior when he appears before other groups, and this inconsistency reinforces the conventional wisdom (that behavioral

deficits are the barriers to racial equity) about the black poor.

In a recent essay in *BlackAgendaReport.com*, Adolph Reed Jr., a University of Pennsylvania political scientist and political

commentator, argues, “Public sacrifice of black poor people has been pro forma Democratic presidential strategy since Clinton ran on the pledge to ‘end welfare as we know it.’”

Reed argues that for many liberals, a vote for Obama offers an effortless way to demonstrate anti-racist sentiments, relieving them of any other responsibility to work for the post-racial society the candidate supposedly embodies.

Conservatives already are composing eulogies for affirmative action.

Ward Connerly, the black, anti-affirmative action crusader, is overflowing with a sense of vindication. “The primary rationale for affirmative action is that America is institutionally racist and institutionally sexist,” Connerly told the Associated Press at the conclusion of the hotly contested primary campaign. “That rationale is undercut in a major way when you look at the success of Sen. (Hillary) Clinton and Sen. Obama.”

The opinions of politicians along the political spectrum and many media pundits seemingly converge on the consensus that the civil rights model is passé and Obama’s prominence is proof. But there is confusion about this issue, even among Obama’s critics.

The motive of the civil rights movement that Jackson exemplifies is to promote racial justice and equity—still distant goals. Obama’s motive, by contrast, is to win the presidential election. ■

Jackson understands his perverse value in this nation’s political calculus: what displeases him pleases much of white America.

BY SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK

The Audacity of Rhetoric



IN JANUARY, WHEN the United States remembered the tragic death of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., an urban history professor at the University of Buffalo named Henry Louis Taylor Jr., bitterly remarked: “All we know is that this guy had a dream. We don’t know what that dream was.”

Taylor was referring to an erasure of historical memory after King’s 1963

march on Washington, after he was cheered as “the moral leader of our nation.”

In the years before his death, King changed his focus to poverty and militarism because he thought that addressing these issues—not solely racial brotherhood—was crucial to making equality real. And he paid the price for this change, becoming more and more of a pariah.

The danger for Sen. Barack Obama is that he is already doing to himself what later historical censorship did to King: He’s cleansing his program of contentious topics in order to assure his electability.

In a famous dialogue in Monty Python’s religious spoof *The Life of Brian*, which takes place in Palestine at the time of Christ, the leader of a Jewish revolutionary resistance organization passionately argues that Romans brought only misery to the Jews. When his followers remark that they nonetheless introduced education, built roads, constructed irrigation, etc., the leader triumphantly concludes: “All right, but apart from sanitation, education, wine, public order, irrigation, roads, the fresh-water system and public health, what have the Romans ever done for us?”

Don’t Obama’s latest proclamations follow the same line? “I stand for a radical break with the Bush administration!” Or: “OK, sure, I pledge to support Israel unconditionally, to maintain the boycott of Cuba, to grant lawbreaking telecommunications corporations immunity, but I still stand for a radical break with the Bush administration!”

When Obama talks about the “audacity to hope,” about “a change we can believe in,” he is using a rhetoric of change that lacks specific content: To hope for what? To change what?

One should not blame Obama for his hypocrisy. Given the complex situation of the United States in today’s world, how far can a new president go in imposing actual change with-

out triggering economic meltdown or political backlash?

But such a pessimistic view nonetheless falls short. Our global situation is not only a hard reality, it is also defined by ideological contours. In other words, it’s defined by what is sayable and unsayable, or what is visible and invisible.

More than a decade ago, when Israel’s *Ha’aretz* newspaper asked then-Labor Party leader Ehud Barak what he would have done if he had been born a Palestinian, Barak responded: “I would have joined a terrorist organization.”

This statement had nothing whatsoever to do with endorsing terrorism and everything to do with opening a space for a real dialogue with Palestinians.

The same thing occurred when Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev launched the slogans of glasnost (openness) and perestroika (reform). It didn’t matter whether Gorbachev “really meant” them. The very words unleashed an avalanche that changed the world.

Or, today, even those who oppose torture legitimize

it by accepting it as a topic worthy of public debate—an immense regression from the Nuremberg Trials following World War II and the subsequent Geneva Convention.

Words are never “only words.” They matter because they define the outlines of what we can do.

In this regard, Obama has already demonstrated an extraordinary ability to change the limits of what one can publicly say. His greatest achievement to date is that he has, in his refined and non-provocative way, introduced into the public speech topics that were once unsayable: the continuing importance of race in politics, the positive role of atheists in public life, the necessity to talk with “enemies” like Iran.

And that is a great achievement, which changes the coordinates of the entire field. Even the Bush administration, having first criticized Obama for this proposal, is now itself talking directly with Iran.

If U.S. politics is to break its current gridlock, it needs new words that will change the way we think and act.

Even measured by the low standards of conventional wisdom, the old saying, “Don’t just talk, do something!” is one of the most stupid things one can say.

Lately we have been doing quite a bit—intervening in foreign countries and destroying the environment.

Perhaps, it’s time to step back, think and say the right thing. ■

Measured by the low standards of conventional wisdom, the old saying ‘Don’t just talk, do something!’ is one of the most stupid things one can say.

BY JULIANNE MALVEAUX

Our Toppling House of Cards



IT IS PAINFUL to watch a house of cards topple. Yet, even as it's being built, we know its destruction is imminent.

The collapse of our nation's housing market might have been predicted by the banking sector's overzealous expansion in homeownership and the infusion of home-equity loan dollars into an otherwise dragging economy.

Once upon a time, home loans were offered at fixed rates for 30 years. People saved 20 percent of the value of a home to show credit worthiness. Mortgage payments didn't fluctuate on fixed-term loans and there was no element of gambling involved in the process.

In the last decade, though, the government developed lending instruments to facilitate homeownership—rates were fixed, rates were variable, payments were set at lower than the interest rate, with high balloon payments expected at the end of a loan. Mortgage brokers worked with borrowers with credit challenges to find loans, offering loan terms that were affordable in the short run and disastrous in the long run.

This fiscal creativity was a function of home values rising so rapidly that people could count on tapping into extra cash and income from their home equity to finance automobiles, education and consumer spending.

Lenders decided to gamble and turn a market that generated marginal profit into one that produced big money. Those deemed not credit worthy—or those without access to information about affordable loans—got subprime loans that offered them too little for too much. Those hoping to renovate their homes, for example, found themselves offered more loan than they wanted, and at higher terms than they were comfortable with.

But there was so much profit to go around that even people with shaky credit histories found themselves bartered with offers to borrow—albeit high-interest ones.

A proposal from Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.), chair of the House Financial Services Committee, could prevent as many as 400,000 foreclosures by refinancing mortgages through the Federal Housing Administration. Frank and Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) are likely to hold hearings in September on the foreclosure crisis. Frank says his plan will not cost

taxpayers, although the bailout of homeowners—and of financing institutions—does put some burden on taxpayers.

What happens to the bankers who made loads of money on an inflated market? Should those who profited from developing unfair loan terms emerge from this crisis unscathed and untaxed on their earnings?

What about renters? While homeowners in trouble are getting a bailout from the Treasury, renters remain disadvantaged in our national obsession with homeownership. Renters don't get the benefits from tax write-offs on mortgage interest. And if their landlord or property owner fails to pay his or her mortgage, the renter is evicted. Worse, renters are now among the taxpayers who will pay for the housing bailout.

The collapse of the housing and financial markets has

Deregulation—and the shadow banking system it created—shredded the financial safety net that the Great Depression had produced.

Reagan-era roots. Beginning with the passage of the 1980 Depository Institutions Deregulation and Monetary Control Act, Congress instituted measures that encouraged financial deregulation. As a result, the

financial services industry—a sector that had once been among the most stable and highly regulated—became one of the freest and most unfettered markets.

In 1994, the Neal-Riegle Interstate Banking Act removed restrictions on banking networks and branch banking. Five years later, the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act repealed banking regulations that dated back to the '30s and ended the separation between insurance companies and banks.

Deregulation—and the shadow banking system it created—shredded the financial safety net that the hardship of the Great Depression had produced. Now, more than a dozen banks have been targeted for closure, the housing market is in shambles and financial markets, too, are feeling the pressure of a decade of bad decisions.

While the crisis will not approach Depression-era levels, many of the ingredients for further tension exist:

Too many homeowners can't pay their mortgages, despite federal legislation.

Too many banks are impeding growth because, newly chastened, they won't lend to potentially good businesses.

And too many borrowers, lenders and bankers are being forced to re-evaluate the fundamentals of transactions.

When the dust clears, those of us who didn't profit when the house of cards was built will be left with the debris—and the shattered lives of those who were at the bottom. ■

No JROTC Left Behind

Are military schools recruitment pools?

BY ALLEN MCDUFFEE



Cadet Melody Johnson, from Spingarn High School JROTC Color Guard in Washington D.C., stands at attention during Justice Department ceremonies honoring National African-American History.

MATTHEW HARTMAN HAD EVERY intention of enlisting in the Army directly after his graduation in two years. But it was Col. Sterling Stokes and his military staff who convinced Hartman that college, not the battlefield, was a better option. At least for now.

"They persuaded me that there is always time to serve my country and that maybe I would be able to serve even better if I went to college first," Hartman, 16, says.

The Richmond, Va., native is a junior at the Franklin Military Academy in Richmond, where Stokes is principal. He earned the highest score on the 2008 National Chemistry Olympiad in his school, and is the type of student college admissions counselors would like to see

among their applicants.

But for Cadet Hartman, the military seemed like a natural progression.

Academies like Franklin Military are part of the country's rapidly expanding Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) program. The academies are exclusively JROTC and the Department of Defense helps fund them—part of a growing trend to introduce military schools into the public school system in primarily poor urban areas where many school systems are struggling, if not failing.

These academies aren't boot camps for delinquents. There is no compulsory military service upon graduation. And they're not the realization of the Bush administration's machinations. In fact, administrators insist the academies are

college prep schools.

But for many, the evidence isn't so clear. Critics like Darlene Graminga, of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), a Quaker pacifist organization, suggest that cases like Hartman's are few and far between, and that the military academies are a veiled attempt to recruit American youth.

Graminga, program director of the group's Truth in Recruiting Program, says, "I hardly doubt that it's a coincidence that these schools are prospering at a time of war."

Despite such concerns, public military academies are wildly popular among many parents and students.

Chicago—with more academies than any other city—can't build them fast enough. Chicago's sixth academy will open this fall. In all, the city has one-third of the country's academies.

Each year, the Chicago Public Schools accepts only about 10 percent of academy applicants. For the 2007-2008 school year, approximately 7,500 students applied for 700 openings in the freshman class.

Extending JROTC

Military academies are part of the JROTC program that began in 1916. Former Secretary of State and retired Gen. Colin Powell is credited with advancing JROTC in its current form, in part by influencing then-President George H.W. Bush in 1992 to more than double the size of the program, from 1,500 JROTC programs to 3,500.

In his book *My American Journey*, Powell wrote: "Inner-city kids, many from broken homes, found stability and role models in Junior ROTC. They got a taste of discipline, the work ethic, and they experienced pride of membership in something healthier than a gang. ... Ju-

nior ROTC is a social bargain.”

In Virginia, the Richmond School Board and its Superintendent Richard Hunter conceptualized Franklin Military Academy—the country’s first secondary military academy—on the heels of the Vietnam War in the late ’70s. It opened its doors to 130 freshmen in the fall of 1980.

The following year, academies opened in St. Louis and Sandy Hook, N.J. After a 16-year gap, the Kenosha Military Academy in Wisconsin was built in 1998. Since then, the academies have grown at a rate of one to two a year.

“Students have to make the choice on their own to be here,” says Stokes, Franklin’s principal.

Once a student makes that first step, the application process is rigorous, including an interview and a written commitment from the parents, as well as the student.

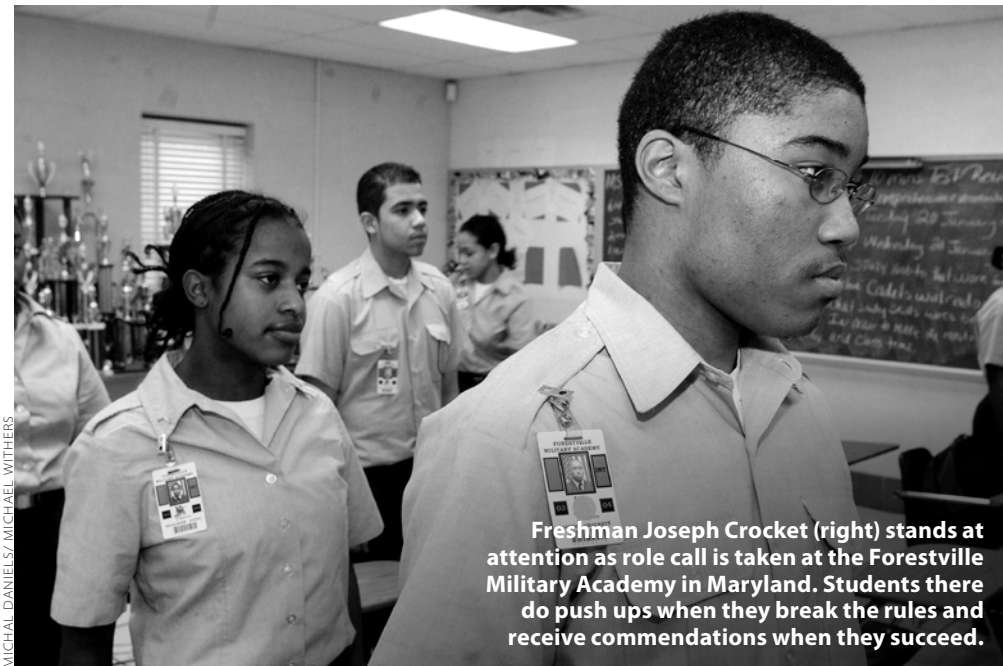
Motivated

“We’re aiming at kids who aren’t in trouble but who aren’t fully realizing their potential, either,” says Ozzie Wright, principal of the Philadelphia Military Academy. “We often see kids who have all the makings of being good students, but have very unstable home lives because of economics and family structures. We can make a difference in these students’ lives.”

Elaine Macon-Johnson, who is in her fourth year at Franklin, teaches technology and business. She had arrived at the academy unwillingly, as part of a job reassignment, doubting whether public military academies should even exist. After a few years at Franklin, she says she became a convert.

“All I have to do is teach now,” Macon-Johnson says. “Before, I would have to spend so much time as disciplinarian.” These days, she says, “I don’t have behavior problems. And on the rare occasion that something does happen, it’s somebody else’s job to take care of, not mine.”

Many academy teachers, most of whom don’t have military backgrounds, say they feel the same way. Walking down the hallway in between classes, military instructor Sgt. Gary McCray says, “Look at this. When you were in school, did you ever see it so calm?” referring to the students quietly moving from one class to another,



Freshman Joseph Crocket (right) stands at attention as role call is taken at the Forestville Military Academy in Maryland. Students there do push ups when they break the rules and receive commendations when they succeed.

conversing. “Everybody is so relaxed,” McCray says.

Roberto Rodriguez, a first-year Marine Military Academy cadet, says, “I like that we could become leaders and we know every student. No bullies, none of that, so it’s real cool.”

Students attending the military academies are required to take one four-year military-related course. The JROTC curriculum includes military history, military protocol, civics and physical fitness. Students often participate in drill team, color guard and extracurricular activities, such as rock climbing and traveling. Some schools arrange an international trip each year for a limited number of students, and nearly all the academies send a large number of students to the Army-Navy football game each year. For the many students who have never been out of state—even out of their city—this is an appealing perk.

Recruitment factories?

As part of the 1916 National Defense Act, JROTC was created to prepare American youth to fight in World War I, if needed. And JROTC falls under the recruitment section of the Pentagon’s budget.

Principals are quick to say that they are not asked to boost the numbers of graduating students who enlist. Stokes says, “It’s not like we have been given [an enlist-

ment] quota here.”

But in February 2000, former Secretary of Defense William Cohen told the House Armed Services Committee that JROTC is “one of the best recruiting devices we could have.” And Powell wrote in *My American Journey*, “Liberal school administrators and teachers claimed that we were trying to ‘militarize’ education. Yes, I’ll admit, the armed forces might get a youngster more inclined to enlist as a result of Junior ROTC. But society got a far greater payoff.”

In a difficult period for military recruiters, the Pentagon is expected to spend \$20.5 billion in 2009 on recruiting, some of which will be distributed to JROTC. Pauline Lipman, a professor of education at the University of Illinois at Chicago, told PBS in December 2007, “It would be really naive to think that the military would, in fact, be expanding these schools and these programs and pouring millions of dollars into the schools at a time when they actually are having a recruitment crisis, if the schools were not about recruiting students.”

The Army has tried to accommodate its recruitment woes by reducing its annual recruitment goal, raising the maximum enlistment age from 35 to 42, lowering mental aptitude standards, and welcoming in the overweight, the physically injured and formerly convicted.

Military statistics over the last two decades indicate that 30 percent to 55 percent of JROTC students eventually enlist. The military academies, however, maintain that their enlistment rates after graduation ranges between 4 percent and 10 percent.

"If the Defense Department is looking to us for recruitment, then they are making a bad investment," says Wright, the principal at Philadelphia Military Academy.

But the numbers are inconclusive, if not misleading. The academies collect their data through exit interviews with graduating students. If a student goes directly into the military upon graduation—and the student has made that decision at the time of filling out the questionnaire—he or she would be part of that 4 percent-to-10 percent pool. However, if he or she doesn't directly enlist and instead, for example, goes to college on a ROTC scholarship, then the academies, like other public high schools, don't have the mechanisms in place to track the student after graduation.

Ambiguities

Hugh Price, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, once advocated using the military's discipline to help at-risk youth. As vice president of the Rockefeller Foundation from 1988 until 1994, he helped conceive and launch the quasi-military program for school dropouts that came to be known as the National Guard Youth Challenge Program.

Price says he now thinks that schools have better options than a military presence. He wants to demilitarize public education and wonders whether the government can "find a way to make the attributes of the military model generic? Can it be done without the military? We need to find a way to help the struggling youth of America without funding from the military."

Under the Bush administration's No Child Left Behind Act, any school that receives federal funding must allow access to military recruiters. One of the military instructors at Franklin boasts that the school had a good relationship with the area recruiters. "Oh yeah," he says, "We see them all the time."

The academies often bill themselves as college prep schools. And looking at the schools and the learning environments, it appears they are making a difference in the students' lives. Arne Duncan, CEO of the Chicago Public Schools system, boasts that the city's military academies have a 94 percent graduation rate versus the district average of 84 percent.

'It would be really naive to think that the military would, in fact, be expanding these schools and these programs at a time when they actually are having a recruitment crisis.'

But Oskar Castro, national coordinator of the AFSC's Youth & Militarism program, isn't convinced.

"Where is the evidence?" he asks. "So many of these schools are so new, and they claim that it's too early to tell [whether a school is successful], so why are we still building them if we don't know?"

And the AFSC's Graminga argues that the academies don't produce better results than other schools that are part of the small charter school programs, currently en vogue among public school leaders in large, urban environments.

"We have seen small schools projects be successful and the successes that are related to the military academies are in line with that," she says. "But there doesn't seem to be anything inherent to the military academies that leads us to say, 'Now, they've got the answer!'"

If Graminga is right, that might explain the success at Franklin Military, which has less than 500 students and an exceptionally low 15 to 1, student-teacher ratio.

Opportunity knocks

Powell and others argue that the military has historically given opportunities to those who have limited options. But making that argument also acknowledges that the military uses the academies as a recruiting tool. And given the academies' demographics and the destruction of the GI Bill, which once provided funding for

a college education, one can reasonably ask whether the Department of Defense is truly concerned with sending poor black and Latino kids to college.

In Richmond, Franklin Military consistently accommodates a 95 percent African-American student body in a city that, according to the 2006 census, has a population of which 20 percent exist be-

low the poverty line and 54 percent are African-American.

Academy administrators maintain that these are the realities of urban America. Philadelphia Military's Wright says, "The wealthier families in cities have the advantage of sending their children to private schools and a certain portion will go to the better public schools. But in cities, we know we are facing a particular demographic."

The military, he adds, has a "history of providing opportunities" to underprivileged sectors of society.

If interest by school districts in military-sponsored education is any indication, we can expect to see a tremendous growth in the number of academies. What is less clear is whether the military academies would be considered successful if the public school systems in these urban areas were doing an adequate job.

"If the military branches are formally involved as sponsors, operators and funders," says Price, "it is naive to expect them to resist the temptation to [use] these programs as a recruitment pipeline. If anything, given global conditions, the pressure on them to do so probably will intensify instead of subside." ■

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MOVING OBAMA LEFT

BY DAVID MOBERG

After Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.) secured his party's nomination in June, his tightly knit campaign message began to fray at the edges. Critics from across the political spectrum charge that Obama has shifted to the center or right on a host of issues, and that the flip-flopping was—take your pick—good, bad, inevitable or duplicitous.

Progressives, whose hopes for Obama grew from his early opposition to the war in Iraq, and the youthful movement his candidacy inspired, wondered how much they could trust him on Iraq, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, civil liberties, gun control, the death penalty, trade, government funding of faith-based groups and other issues.

Disappointed as some progressives may be, Obama has not made a dramatic shift to the center: He's always been more centrist, cautious and compromising than many of his supporters—and critics—have wanted to admit.

"I don't think he's changed positions," says Robert Borosage, co-director of the progressive advocacy group, Campaign for America's Future. "He's always been a cautious liberal."

The *Wall Street Journal* took the supposed changes as Obama's admission that the conservative positions on most issues were correct, and concluded that Obama, as much as Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), would represent a third term for Bush.

Right-wing anti-Obama groups warned their followers that a devious Obama was trying to woo evangelicals from the conservative fold. McCain's backers used the controversies to tarnish Obama's character and disillusion his supporters.

Meanwhile, centrists rejoice that the middle—wherever that shifting spot may be—is always best. And a few on the left find evidence, once again, that no Democrat can be trusted.

Even if Obama is more consistent than critics allege, questions still haunt progressives. Does an Obama presidency promise dramatic and progressive change, as his rhetoric sometimes suggests? Or will Obama simply shift from Bush's neoconservatism back to the confused—if slightly less conservative—perspective of the Democratic Party establishment?

And what president would Obama most resemble? A Lincolnesque figure who would bring national unity (without a civil war), as Obama often implies?

A Clinton, who campaigned to "put people first"—as he had put it—but failed to take bold steps and ended up triangulating political differences?

A Kennedy, who inspired millions but got dragged down by conventional assumptions about American power in the world, as evidenced by the Vietnam War and Bay of Pigs?

Or, as many on the left fantasize, an FDR running a conservative campaign but responding to the times with dramatic reforms?

the American people,” Obama had said in February. “We must reaffirm that no one in this country is above the law.”

But in June, Obama told reporters that the FISA compromise was an improvement since it would put an “inspector general in place to investigate what happened previously.” He continued: “Given ... all the information I received ... the un-

according to a November 2007 *Chicago Tribune* report, and thus shifted on that point in his support for the court decision.

Obama also sided with the conservative bloc’s view that the death penalty is constitutional in child rape cases.

As a state senator, Obama reformed procedures to Illinois’ flawed application of the death penalty, but he did not op-

Disappointed as some progressives may be, Obama has not made a dramatic shift to the center: He’s always been more centrist and compromising than many supporters want to admit.

On the record

The character of an Obama presidency will depend not just on Obama but also on worsening world conditions that demand a new direction—economic collapse and financial instability, environmental and energy crises, failure of a military approach to terrorism, worsening inequality and insecurity for most Americans.

It also will depend on opportunities, such as the size of a Democratic congressional majority, and pressures, including demands from popular movements at home for an end to the war, single-payer national health insurance and worker rights, as well as high expectations from nations and leaders around the world.

What Obama says as a candidate does affect his chances of winning. It can also skew the direction of his potential presidency and demonstrate his will—and ability—to be a forceful leader.

In most of the controversies, Obama has maintained previous positions that often departed from progressive orthodoxy.

On other points, however, he has shifted in disappointing ways.

Obama broke his promise to vote against and filibuster the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) re-authorization. The measure included immunity from prosecution for the telecommunications companies that aided the Bush administration’s warrantless wiretapping of citizens.

“There is no reason why telephone companies should be given blanket immunity to cover violations of the rights of

derlying program itself actually is important and useful to American security as long as it has these constraints on them.”

Though Obama didn’t change his views on the merits of the legislation, his vote for the bill—which passed easily, thanks to many Democrats’ defections—angered civil libertarians and the left blogosphere.

Obama’s vote also defied majority public opinion: nearly two-thirds of respondents to a January 2008 poll for the American Civil Liberties Union said that the government should be required to get an individual warrant before listening to conversations between American citizens and people outside the country. Obama’s decision did little to inoculate him from McCain attacks and undermined his image as a different, more principled political leader.

Obama also angered many liberals by siding with the conservative bloc of the Supreme Court against the Washington, D.C., handgun ban that interpreted the Second Amendment as protecting an individual right to own guns.

Obama has publicly supported the individual right to possess firearms at least since his 2004 U.S. senate race. A campaign spokesperson said in April that a staffer in Obama’s 1996 Illinois senate campaign incorrectly indicated he supported a ban on handguns.

Obama—who is a longstanding supporter of government’s right to regulate guns—has said he believed that the District of Columbia gun ban was constitutional,

pose the death penalty in all cases.

In his autobiography *The Audacity of Hope*, he wrote, “I believe there are some crimes—mass murder, the rape and murder of a child—so heinous, so beyond the pale [that the death penalty is warranted].” But the crucial issue before the Supreme Court was whether the rape alone—not murder—of a child permitted capital punishment. So Obama, reversing his previous position, took sides with right-wing Justice Antonin Scalia when he could have deferred to the court majority.

Shifts, but not flip-flops

Critics have misrepresented or overstated most of Obama’s other supposed rightward shifts. Progressives might not like his decisions, but they are hardly “flip-flops,” as critics from both sides have alleged.

For example, Obama’s decision not to rely on public financing for the general election reflects both his own fundraising success and the massive funding edge the Republican National Committee has over the Democratic National Committee.

But John K. Wilson, author of *Barack Obama: This Improbable Quest*, argues that Obama had only pledged to “aggressively pursue ... a fundraising truce,” not to adopt public financing under any conditions.

In November 2007, Obama wrote, “My plan requires both major party candidates to agree on a fundraising truce, return excess money from donors, and stay within the public financing system for the general election. ... If I am the Democrat-

ic nominee, I will aggressively pursue an agreement with the Republican nominee to preserve a publicly financed general election.” Obama could have been more aggressive in pursuing an agreement, but he wasn’t backing out of a firm pledge to take public funding.

It’s no big surprise that on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Obama has muted his earlier expressions of sympathy for the Palestinian people and echoed full-throated support for Israeli positions. In a speech to the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee, he called for recognition of an “undivided” Jerusalem as the Israeli capital. He explained afterward that, rather than prejudging a thorny “final status” issue in the Middle East conflict, he was arguing that the city should not be physically divided by barbed wire.

Obama’s embrace of Bush’s program for funding faith-based initiatives, which angered many secular progressives, was not a flip-flop. He has said openly that religious institutions should play a greater role in public life.

In the *Audacity of Hope*, Obama distances himself from secular liberalism, writing that, “I think we make a mistake when we fail to acknowledge the power of faith in the lives of the American people, and so avoid joining a serious debate about how to reconcile faith with our

modern, pluralistic democracy.”

He advocated regulation that would require non-discrimination in hiring and the use of public funds only for secular ends.

“To truly be successful, this initiative must utilize the unique resources and identity of the faith community, while at the same time recognizing the indispensable role that government and public policy must play in tackling the root causes of poverty,” writes Jim Wallis of the liberal evangelical group Sojourners. “Obama’s proposals also contain necessary protections for religious liberty, pluralism and constitutional safeguards.”

Mainstream reproductive choice groups such as NARAL and Planned Parenthood support Obama and have usually given him 100 percent approval on his voting record (even though he voted “present” on some legislation in the Illinois senate, as part of legislative strategy by defenders of abortion rights).

In April, however, Obama, departing from the position of most pro-choice organizations, said that states could properly restrict late-term abortions if they make an exception for cases that threaten the health of the mother.

In a recent interview with *Relevant*, a religious magazine, Obama said “mental distress” should not be counted as a health exception. NARAL responded to this new

statement—not necessarily a shift, since his earlier votes were against late-term abortion bans with no exceptions—by emphasizing that Obama’s position was still consistent with the landmark Supreme Court ruling in *Roe v. Wade*.

Obama “is right on the health exception, and he is right on reproductive choice, and he is going to be there for us 100 percent,” NARAL President Nancy Keenan told National Public Radio.

During the primaries, Obama said he would re-negotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA. Then in June, *Fortune* magazine headlined this story: “Obama: NAFTA not so bad after all.”

This was no flip: Obama had never proposed to cancel NAFTA, simply reopen NAFTA and use U.S. leverage to strengthen labor and environmental protections, which he says he still wants to include in all trade deals. Obama has consistently expressed his support for expanded trade while recognizing the costs that globalization imposes on many people.

Progressives want Obama to expand his critique of current global economic policy, but despite those reservations, AFL-CIO public policy director and long-time progressive trade policy analyst Thea Lee says, “I think [Obama] has a better position on trade than any Democratic presidential nominee in my memory.”

Obama stirred controversy when he said he might “refine” his plans for Iraq as conditions change. He quickly restated his plan to start withdrawing troops as soon as he takes office and to remove all combat forces within 16 months—a strategy given new credibility by Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki’s call for foreign troops to withdraw by 2010. Throughout the campaign, Obama has said, he would be “as careful getting out as we were careless getting in.”

“I don’t think his position on Iraq has changed,” says Tom Swan, manager of Iraq Campaign 2008, a coalition committed to pushing withdrawal from Iraq during the presidential election. “It’s not as fast a withdrawal as many of us want, but it’s clearly different than staying for 100 years.”

There are two bigger worries for progres-



NICHOLAS KAMM/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

sives: First, how big a residual force would Obama retain and what would they do? Second, will his shift of troops to Afghanistan presage a counterproductive war in that country—making it Obama's Iraq?

The issue is not whether Obama has flipped, but whether he will shape a new foreign policy that acknowledges limits to militarism, unilateralism and the

for dramatic change and, for other supporters, a new post-partisan politics. If he appears not to be principled in his pursuit of fundamental change, he risks losing the energy that could carry him to victory.

Strategists from the Democratic left argue that Obama needs a bold progressive plan, especially on pocketbook economic issues and the war, not only to solve the na-

and the option of a public plan

While some on the left may still opt for the Green Party's Cynthia McKinney or independent Ralph Nader, most typically say they support Obama because of the need to defeat McCain. Members of the 125 chapters of Progressive Democrats for America (PDA) overwhelmingly preferred Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio) or

'The enthusiasm Obama garnered from young people was based on their perception—rooted in rebellion against Bush—of him related to what they wanted to see, not what was there.'

exercise of global power. To his credit, Obama has emphasized aggressive diplomacy over war, particularly in dealing with Iran, and despite his plan to expand military action in Afghanistan, he also proposes increasing economic development aid to win its people away from supporting the Taliban.

No Wellstone

Domestically, Obama's sermons to black audiences about family responsibility are politically valuable for winning white votes. Despite legitimate criticism that blacks alone seem to be singled out for failing families or watching too much television, many African Americans also embrace Obama's message. It was consistent with Obama's politics (he often talks about how government can't solve all problems) and did not preclude increased social responsibility toward the needy.

And his appointments of many mainstream Democratic economic and foreign policy advisers may raise anxieties, but they're not surprising for a candidate who has talked about transcending ideological divisions. Overall, Obama is no crusader like the late Sen. Paul Wellstone (D-Minn.), but a "pragmatic progressive," says Wilson.

"He's made some small shifts but no fundamental change," says Wilson. "Some on the left simply overestimated where he stood and thought he was some leftist. He hasn't changed fundamental values, but he's always been willing to compromise."

Throughout the primaries, Obama walked a political tightrope, inspiring hope

tion's problems but also, simply, to win.

"The enthusiasm he garnered from younger people was based on their perception of him related to what they wanted to see, not what was there," says Bill Fletcher, executive editor of BlackCommentator.com, and a leader of Progressives for Obama. "Their perceptions of him were rooted in rebellion against the Bush and Clinton years, and their hopes for a different kind of politics. If Obama presents himself as a kinder, gentler DLC'er [the corporate-oriented Democratic Leadership Conference], it's not going to inspire."

'The movement, not the person'

Antiwar and healthcare proponents are organizing independent efforts to make their issues central to the presidential race this fall, and to keep pressure on Obama.

Iraq Campaign 2008, for example, is mobilizing a broad coalition to knock on "a million doors for peace" on Sept. 20, talking about the war in Iraq and its costs to Americans. On healthcare, progressives are divided between growing ranks of single-payer, Medicare-for-all advocates and a new, institutionally weightier coalition of more than 100 labor unions and other advocacy groups—Health Care for America Now. The coalition, which includes organizations such as AFSCME (public employees) SEIU, the AFL-CIO, Campaign for America's Future, and ACORN—promote a strategy closer to Obama's proposal that would include employer-provided or individually purchased corporate insurance

John Edwards. Now, says PDA Executive Director Tim Carpenter, their goals in the campaign are to support "more the Barack Obama movement, not Barack Obama, the person" and "to make him a better candidate."

Democracy for America did not endorse a candidate in the primaries. Now the 725,000-member group—which grew out of the 2004 Howard Dean campaign—is working to support Obama and to push issues, such as withdrawal from Iraq and universal health insurance.

"This battle is about a culture of activism versus a culture of incumbency," says DFA chair Jim Dean, Howard Dean's brother. Whatever disagreements DFA may have with Obama, "I'd rather have the discussion with Obama than with John McCain."

Obama's campaign will set its own course. The dominant culture could push him to become more conservative, not only during the campaign, but even more so if he wins. Yet by organizing popular movements, progressives can promote issues in the election, encourage Obama not to drift to the right, and build the expectations and organizations that put demands on an Obama presidency.

"It's going to be a bumpy ride," says Carl Davidson, an organizer with Progressives for Obama. "People will get bent out of shape. This is politics. You've got to keep a laser focus—stop McCain, stop the war, keep your eyes on the prize."

And the prize is the possibility—not the certainty—of what an Obama presidency can deliver. ■

Dereliction of Duty

McCain's record on veterans' issues is shocking and awful

BY CLIFF SCHECTER



Presidential hopeful Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) talks to World War II veteran George Dusdenbury on Jan. 18, in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

AT A TOWN HALL meeting in Denver in early July, a Vietnam veteran asked presidential candidate Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) why he had opposed increasing healthcare for veterans whenever Congress had taken up the issue over the past six years. McCain virtually ignored the man's question, dissembling his opposition to an updated GI Bill for veterans. After the questioner challenged McCain's response, the senator reacted as he usually does when queried beyond his comfort level: He got visibly angry.

Because McCain is running for president almost solely on his biography as a war hero, he can't—and won't—allow the slightest doubt to linger about his dedication to soldiers both past and present. It didn't matter that the vet simply wanted to know how McCain—himself a former soldier and prisoner of war—could op-

pose important healthcare legislation for veterans. In fact, he didn't even ask McCain about the GI Bill that he opposed, which had been supported by a bipartisan group of 75 senators, including Republican veterans Chuck Hagel (Neb.) and John Warner (Va.).

Most notably, McCain also testily responded to his inquisitor that he had "received every award from every vets organization."

The problem is, not only is that assertion not true, but McCain's record on veterans' issues paints a picture of a man who has been willfully negligent when it comes to providing for his former brothers and sisters in arms.

As Iraq War veteran and former Democratic congressional candidate Paul Hackett says, "Here is a guy who touts himself as a friend of veterans, but his history shows just the opposite. How can

someone who cares about our men and women in the armed services vote against the GI Bill or veterans' healthcare?"

Dying on the vine

In 2005, Sen. Daniel Akaka (D-Hawaii), now chair of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, introduced legislation that would have increased veterans' medical care by \$2.8 billion in 2006. He also introduced another bill that would have set aside \$10 million for "readjustment counseling services"—a program to provide a wide range of counseling, outreach and referral services for those returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, to ease their readjustment back into society. (This program was started in 1979 for Vietnam veterans, so one would think McCain is quite familiar with it.)

But McCain—and other Republicans who are more concerned with using government funds for tax cuts for mul-

timillionaires or for corporate subsidies to oil and gas companies—voted this effort down.

The following year, Akaka requested \$1.5 billion for veterans' medical care and an additional \$430 million for the Department of Veteran Affairs for outpatient care and treatment for veterans. But, once again, McCain voted against these proposals, while offering no measures of his own, and without pushing his party to help U.S. veterans.

In 2005, Sens. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) and Patty Murray (D-Wash.) saw their respective veteran amendments killed. These amendments would have funded additional medical care and readjustment counseling for Iraq veterans with mental illness, post-traumatic stress disorder or substance abuse disorder. McCain voted "no" on both.

In 2005, and again in 2006, Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) proposed legislation that would have indexed veterans' health-care benefits to take into account the annual changes in inflation and veterans' population. She proposed paying for the indexing by restoring the pre-2001 top tax rate for income more than \$1 million, closing corporate tax loopholes and delaying tax cuts for the wealthy. One guess as to how McCain voted.

In early 2006, Sen. Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.) proposed an amendment for additional funding to shore up the collapsing infrastructures at veterans' hospitals around the country. The bill would have mandated a minor rollback in the capital gains tax cuts that the Bush administration has given to the richest one-fifth of 1 percent of Americans. McCain, presumably more concerned about the 100-plus lobbyists associated with his campaign than the health of veterans, opposed this amendment.

Not long after, in February 2007, the *Washington Post* exposed horror stories about the crumbling infrastructure at Washington, D.C.'s Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

In February 2006, Sen. Jack Reed (D-R.I.) sponsored an amendment that would have rolled back capital gains tax cuts so that much-needed equipment for troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan

could be purchased. McCain and the Republican leadership made sure those tax cuts stayed in place, and, as a result, the troops didn't get what they needed.

Finally, in June 2006, Sens. John Kerry (D-Mass.) and Russ Feingold (D-Wis.) authored a bill—S. Amdt. 4442—"to require the redeployment of United States Armed Forces from Iraq in order to further a polit-

McCain's record on veterans' issues paints a picture of a man who has been willfully negligent when it comes to providing for his former brothers and sisters in arms.

ical solution in Iraq, encourage the people of Iraq to provide for their own security, and achieve victory in the war on terror."

It received 13 votes. Needless to say, McCain's wasn't one of them.

McCain was also noticeably absent on two measures that members of both parties should be able to embrace.

The Homes for Heroes Act—which Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.) introduced in April 2007—would have helped provide housing for low-income veterans and helped tackle the problem of homelessness among America's military veterans. The bill died, though the House overwhelmingly passed a similar bill in July; its companion version still awaits a new vote in the Senate.

The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2007—introduced by Sen. Jim Webb (D-Va.)—restores the old GI Bill and provides returning troops with the more robust educational benefits enjoyed by the men and women who served in the three decades following World War II. Although this bill did not initially make it to vote, it was incorporated into the new GI bill that the Senate—absent McCain, who was at a fundraiser in California—passed in May.

Failing scorecard

The Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), the country's largest Iraq veterans' group, looked at 155 Senate votes since Sept. 11, 2001, on legislation that "affected troops, veterans or military families." It then awarded each senator a grade by

comparing his or her votes to IAVA's view of what constitutes effective support for active troops, veterans and their families.

No senator received an "A" grade. Thirteen senators—all Democrats—received an "A-." The worst grade received by a Senate Democrat was higher than the best grade granted to a Republican. Obama, for his part, got a B+.

McCain received a "D."

In fact, IAVA founder and Executive Director Paul Rieckhoff says that "there has been no bigger obstacle to passage of the GI Bill than Senator McCain. Even though he'd now like to claim credit for it, he didn't even show up. He thought it was more important to be in California for a fundraiser."

In 2007, the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), after surveying McCain's votes on healthcare issues for its 1.3 million members, gave him only 20 percent. By contrast, DAV gave 194 Democrats and 7 Republicans a perfect 100 percent. Even by GOP standards, McCain's performance suffers.

Often times, his is a faithful vote for party above principle. This party-line voting pattern suggests that McCain is a legislative follower—if he bothers to show up at all.

In a 2006 *Washington Post* column by David Ignatius, McCain described his loyalty to Bush as being so profound that he said he wouldn't rule out giving up his Senate seat to become secretary of defense if Donald Rumsfeld were to leave.

"I would have to assess where I can be most effective," said McCain. "It's awfully hard to say no to the president of the United States."

McCain's record makes that abundantly clear. ■

This article is adapted from The Real McCain: Why Conservatives Don't Trust Him and Why Independents Shouldn't (PoliPoint Press).

Why Soldiers Rape

Culture of misogyny, illegal occupation, fuel sexual violence in military

BY HELEN BENEDICT

AN ALARMING NUMBER OF women soldiers are being sexually abused by their comrades-in-arms, both at war and at home. This fact has received a fair amount of attention lately from researchers and the press—and deservedly so.

But the attention always focuses on the women: where they were when assaulted, their relations with the assailant, the effects on their mental health and careers, whether they are being adequately helped, and so on. That discussion, as valuable as it is, misses a fundamental point. To understand military sexual assault, let alone know how to stop it, we must focus on the perpetrators. We need to ask: Why do soldiers rape?

Rape in civilian life is already unacceptably common. One in six women is raped or sexually assaulted in her lifetime, according to the National Institute of Justice, a number so high it should be considered an epidemic.

In the military, however, the situation is even worse. Rape is almost twice as frequent as it is among civilians, especially in wartime. Soldiers are taught to regard one another as family, so military rape resembles incest. And most of the soldiers who rape are older and of higher rank than their victims, so are taking advantage of their authority to attack the very people they are supposed to protect.

Department of Defense reports show that nearly 90 percent of rape victims in the Army are junior-ranking women, whose average age is 21, while most of the assailants are non-commissioned officers or junior men, whose average age is 28.

This sexual violence persists in spite of strict laws against rape in the military and a concerted Pentagon effort in 2005 to reform procedures for reporting the



Army Capt. Jennifer Machmer testifies before a congressional caucus that she was assaulted in 2003 in Kuwait by another U.S. soldier.

MARK WILSON/GETTY IMAGES

crime. Unfortunately, neither the press nor the many teams of psychologists and sociologists who study veterans ever seem to ask why.

THE ANSWER APPEARS to lie in a confluence of military culture, the psychology of the assailants and the nature of war.

Two seminal studies have examined military culture and its attitudes toward women: one by Duke University Law Professor Madeline Morris in 1996, which was presented in the paper “By Force of Arms: Rape, War, and Military Culture” and published in *Duke Law Journal*; and the other by University of California professor and folklorist Carol Burke in 2004 and explained in her book, *Camp All-American, Hanoi Jane and the High-And-Tight: Gender, Folklore and Changing*

Military Culture (Beacon Press). Both authors found that military culture is more misogynistic than even many critics of the military would suspect. Sometimes this misogyny stems from competition and sometimes from resentment, but it lies at the root of why soldiers rape.

One recent Iraq War veteran reflected this misogyny when he described his Marine Corp training for a collection of soldiers’ works called *Warrior Writers*, published by Iraq Veterans Against the War in 2008:

The [Drill Instructor’s] nightly homiletic speeches, full of an unabashed hatred of women, were part of the second phase of boot camp: the process of rebuilding recruits into Marines.

Morris and Burke both show that military language reveals this “unabashed hatred of

women” all the time. Even with a force that is now 14 percent female, and with rules that prohibit drill instructors from using racial epithets and curses, those same instructors still routinely denigrate recruits by calling them “pussy,” “girl,” “bitch,” “lady” and “dyke.” The everyday speech of soldiers is still riddled with sexist insults.

Soldiers still openly peruse pornography that humiliates women. (Pornography is officially banned in the military, but is easily available to soldiers through the mail and from civilian sources, and there is a significant correlation between pornography circulation and rape rates, according to Duke’s Morris. And military men still sing the misogynist rhymes that have been around for decades. For example, Burke’s book cites this Naval Academy chant:

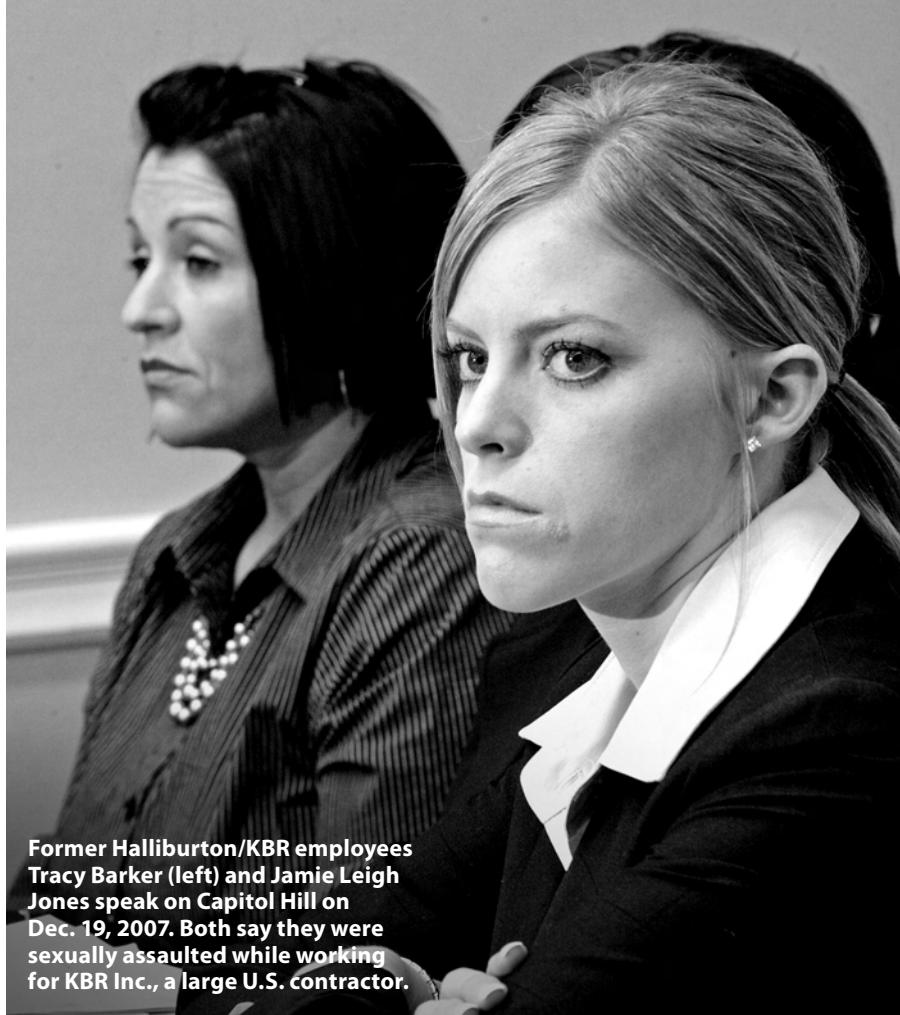
Who can take a chainsaw
Cut the bitch in two
Fuck the bottom half
And give the upper half to you...

The message in all these insults is that women have no business trying to be soldiers. In 2007, Sgt. Sarah Scully of the Army’s 8th Military Police Brigade wrote to me in an e-mail from Kuwait, where she was serving: “In the Army, any sign that you are a woman means you are automatically ridiculed and treated as inferior.”

Army Spc. Mickiela Montoya, who was in Iraq for 11 months from 2005-2006, put it another way: “There are only three things the guys let you be if you’re a girl in the military: a bitch, a ho or a dyke. One guy told me he thinks the military sends women over to give the guys eye candy to keep them sane. He told me in Vietnam they had prostitutes, but they don’t have those in Iraq, so they have women soldiers instead.”

The view of women as sexual prey has always been present in military culture. Indeed, civilian women have been seen as sexual booty for conquering soldiers since the beginning of human history. So, it should come as no surprise that the sexual persecution of female soldiers has been going on in the armed forces for decades.

- A 2004 study of veterans from Vietnam and all wars since, conducted by



Former Halliburton/KBR employees Tracy Barker (left) and Jamie Leigh Jones speak on Capitol Hill on Dec. 19, 2007. Both say they were sexually assaulted while working for KBR Inc., a large U.S. contractor.

CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

psychotherapist Maureen Murdoch and published in the journal *Military Medicine*, found that 71 percent of the women said they were sexually assaulted or raped while serving.

- In 2003, a survey of female veterans from Vietnam through the first Gulf War by psychologist Anne Sadler and her colleagues, published in the *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, found that 30 percent said they were raped in the military.
- And a 1995 study of female veterans of the Gulf and earlier wars, also conducted by Murdoch and published in *Archives of Family Medicine*, reported that 90 percent had been sexually harassed, which means anything from being pressured for sex to being relentlessly teased and stared at.
- A 2007 survey by the Department of Veterans Affairs found that homelessness among female veterans is rapidly increasing as women soldiers come back from Iraq and Afghanistan. Forty percent of these homeless female veterans say they were sexu-

ally abused while in the service.

Defense Department numbers are much lower. In Fiscal Year 2007, the Pentagon reported 2,085 sexual assaults among military women, which given that there are about 200,000 active-duty women in the armed forces, is a mere fraction of what the veterans studies indicate. The discrepancy can be explained by the fact that the Pentagon counts only those rapes that soldiers have officially reported.

Having the courage to report a rape is hard enough for civilians, where unsympathetic police, victim-blaming myths, and the fear of reprisal prevent some 60 percent of rapes from being brought to light, according to a 2005 Department of Justice study.

But within the military, reporting is much riskier. Platoons are enclosed, hierarchical societies, riddled with gossip, so any woman who reports a sexual assault has little chance of remaining anonymous. She will probably have to face her assailant day after day and put up with resentment and blame from other soldiers

A Personal Story

Staff Sgt. Sheila Norris, 27 (she asked that her real name be withheld to protect her privacy), grew up in Mundelein, Ill., a suburb of Chicago. She enlisted in the Air Force when she was 20 for the college money, to escape a dead-end job, and to find direction for herself. In 2007, she wrote to Helen Benedict about her life as a soldier:

I spent six years serving my country and six months of that in Afghanistan, fighting for our country's freedom. While there, I was sexually harassed daily. I lived in constant fear of my life while doing convoys and I feared being raped when I returned to base. I felt the eyes of the men on me all the time.

One day, my commander, a colonel, commented about some rapes on base and basically brushed it off. When I told him we should know more about what happened, he laughed and said, "I don't understand how you can get raped when you carry a weapon around 24 hours a day." This was the same man I would hear talk about a woman's breasts as she walked around base.

I was constantly yelling at people who looked at me. I felt like I had lost my mind. When I came home, I told my supervisor about what had gone on. He told me I was in the military and that is what happens, [so] "deal" with it.

I secretly saw a therapist while I was in the military, but knowing well that I would be ostracized if anyone knew.

I did my job well the entire time I was in but am now left feeling empty. In the end I know I didn't help change anything and this saddens me more than anything else. I feel like my time could have been spent fighting for women rather than cowering in the corner, not wanting to feel pushed out.

Now I spend two hours a week in therapy trying to sort out the anger I've been feeling since returning home. More than a year later, I am still completely void of feeling good about the person I am.

So much more needs to be done, but unfortunately many women feel that this is the way things are, so they must deal with it by themselves.



Former U.S. Air Force Academy Cadet Beth Davis testifies during a hearing in Washington, D.C. Davis says she was repeatedly raped by a superior cadet in her squadron during her freshman year at the academy.

ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES

who see her as a snitch. She risks being persecuted by her assailant if he is her superior, and punished by any commanders who consider her a troublemaker. And because military culture demands that all soldiers keep their pain and distress to themselves, reporting an assault will make her look weak and cowardly.

For all these reasons, some 80 percent of military rapes are never reported, as the Pentagon itself acknowledges.

THIS WIDESPREAD MISOGYNY in the military actively encourages a rape culture. It sends the message to men that, no matter how they feel about women, they won't fit in as soldiers unless they prove themselves a "brother" by demeaning and persecuting women at every opportunity. So even though most soldiers are not rapists, and most men do not hate women, in the military even the nicest guys succumb to the pressure to act as if they do.

Of the 40 or so female veterans I have interviewed over the past two years, all but two said they were constantly sexually harassed by their comrades while they were serving in Iraq or Afghanistan, and many told me that the men were worse in groups than they were individually. Air Force Sgt. Marti Ribeiro, for example, told me that she was relentlessly harassed for all eight years of her service, both in training and during her deployments in 2003 and 2006:

I ended up waging my own war against an enemy dressed in the same uniform as mine. I had a senior non-commissioned officer harass me on a regular basis. He would constantly quiz me about my sex life, show up at the barracks at odd hours of the night and ask personal questions that no supervisor has a right to ask. I had a colonel sexually harass me in ways I'm too embarrassed to explain. Once my sergeant sat with me at lunch in the chow hall, and he said, 'I feel like I'm in a fish bowl, the way all the men's eyes are boring into your back.' I told him, 'That's what my life is like.'

Misogyny has always been at the root of sexual violence in the military, but two other factors contribute to it, as well: the type of man who chooses to enter the all-volunteer force and the nature of the Iraq War.

The economic reasons behind enlistment are well understood. The military is the primary path out of poverty and dead-end jobs for many of the poor in America. What is less discussed is that many soldiers enlist as teenagers to escape troubled or violent homes.

Two studies of Army and Marine recruits, one conducted in 1996 by psychologists L.N. Rosen and L. Martin, and the other in 2005 by Jessica Wolfe and her colleagues of the Boston Veterans Affairs Health Center, both of which were published in the journal *Military Medicine*, found that half the male enlistees had been physically abused in childhood, one-sixth had been sexually abused, and 11 percent had experienced

both. This is significant because, as psychologists have long known, childhood abuse often turns men into abusers.

In the '70s, when the women's movement brought general awareness of rape to a peak, three men—criminologist Menachim Amir and psychologists Nicholas Groth and Gene Abel—conducted separate but groundbreaking studies of imprisoned rapists. They found that rapists are not motivated by out-of-control lust, as is widely thought, but by a mix of anger, sexual sadism and the need to dominate—urges that are usually formed in childhood. Therefore, the best way to understand a rapist is to think of him as a torturer who uses sex as a weapon to degrade and destroy his victims. This is just as true of a soldier rapist as it is of a civilian who rapes.

Nobody has yet proven that abusive men like this seek out the military—attracted by its violent culture—but several scholars suspect that this is so, including the aforementioned Morris and Rutgers University law professor Elizabeth L. Hillman, author of a forthcoming paper on sexual violence in the military. Hillman writes, "There is ... the possibility that the demographics of the all-volunteer force draw more rape-prone men into uniform as compared to civil society."

Worse, according to the Defense Department's own reports, the military has been exacerbating the problem by granting an increasing number of "moral waivers" to its recruits since 9/11, which means enlisting men with records of domestic and sexual violence.

Furthermore, the military has an abysmal record when it comes to catching, prosecuting and punishing its rapists. The Pentagon's 2007 Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military found that 47 percent of the reported sexual assaults in 2007 were dismissed as unworthy of investigation, and only about 8 percent of the cases went to court-martial, reflecting the difficulty female soldiers have in making themselves heard or believed when they report sexual assault within the military. The majority of assailants were given what the Pentagon calls "non-judicial punishments, administrative ac-

tions and discharges." By contrast, in civilian life, 40 percent of those accused of sex crimes are prosecuted.

Which brings us to the question: Do the reasons soldiers rape have anything to do with the nature of the wars we are waging today, particularly in Iraq?

Robert Jay Lifton, a professor of psychiatry who studies war crimes, theorizes that soldiers are particularly prone to commit atrocities in a war of brutal occupation, where the enemy is civilian resistance, the command sanctions torture, and the war is justified by distorted reasoning and obvious lies.

Thus, many American troops in Iraq have deliberately shot children, raped civilian women and teenagers, tortured prisoners of war, and abused their own comrades because they see no moral justification for the war, and are reduced to nothing but self-loathing, anger, fear and hatred.

ALTHOUGH THESE EXPLANATIONS for why soldiers rape are dispiriting, they do at least suggest that the military could institute the following reforms:

- Promote and honor more women soldiers. The more respect women are shown by the command, the less abuse they will get from their comrades.
- Teach officers and enlistees that rape is torture and a war crime.
- Expel men from the military who attack their female comrades.
- Ban the consumption of pornography.
- Prohibit the use of sexist language by drill instructors.
- Educate officers to insist that women be treated with respect.
- Train military counselors to help male and female soldiers not only with war trauma, but also with childhood abuse and sexual assault.
- Cease admitting soldiers with backgrounds of domestic or sexual violence.

And last—but far from least—end the war in Iraq. ■

This article is adapted from The Lonely Soldier: The Private War of Women Serving in Iraq, to be published by Beacon Press in April 2009.

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Bad for Democracy
How the Presidency Undermines
the Power of the People
Dana D. Nelson

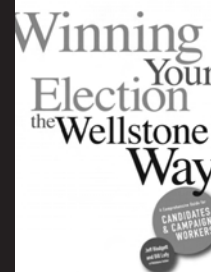
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Striking on the Shoulders of Giants

Injustice persists at copper mine that sparked Mexican Revolution

BY KARI LYDERSEN AND JESSICA PUPOVAC

CANANEA, MEXICO—JESUS VERDUGO was born in this hot, dry mining town nestled in the mountains of Sonora, about 25 miles south of the U.S.-Mexico border. A miner like his father, he grew up on the tract of land where the open-pit mine and town converge.

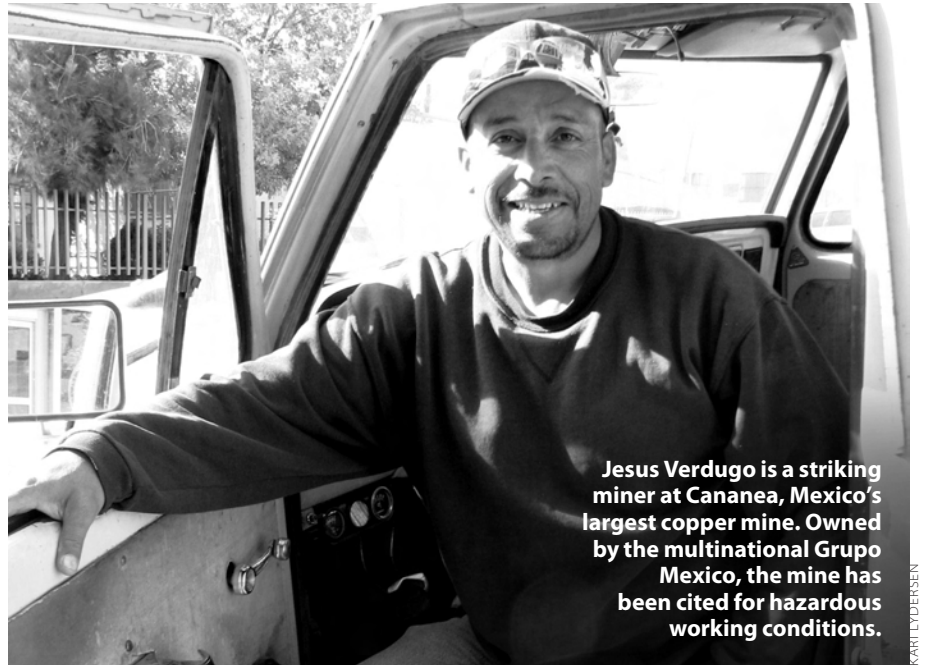
Cananea is home to Mexico's largest copper mine. And Verdugo, 43, is the burly, charismatic, de facto leader of the local union—Section 65 of the Miners and Metallurgical Workers Union of Mexico (SNTMMSR). These days, his organizing entails driving his rickety, yellow pickup along winding rutted roads to check on striking copper miners who, in packs of 10 to 30, guard the various mine entrances, seven days a week. Yards away, members of a private security force (dressed in olive military garb and armed with billy clubs) lounge behind barricades of sandbags and a hurricane fence.

On July 30, 2007, Verdugo and 1,300 other workers went on strike, demanding safe working conditions, healthcare and recognition of the 70-year-old union's elected leadership.

Cananea's legacy

At the turn of the 20th century, Col. William Green, a U.S. citizen who owned the mine, paid his Mexican employees far less than his American workers. In 1906, the mine's workers—organized by anarchist Ricardo Flores Magón—staged a strike that garnered support from the Industrial Workers of the World.

Green ultimately crushed the miners' rebellion with help from Mexico's then-dictator Porfirio Diaz and the Arizona Rangers, a law enforcement group formed to apprehend outlaws. But the Cananea strike—and the 30 Mexican and six American workers



Jesus Verdugo is a striking miner at Cananea, Mexico's largest copper mine. Owned by the multinational Grupo Mexico, the mine has been cited for hazardous working conditions.

KARI LYDERSEN

who died during it—became a rallying cry for the 1910 Mexican Revolution.

In 1971, Mexico nationalized Cananea's massive copper mine. But in 1989, the government of the notoriously corrupt President Carlos Salinas de Gortari sold it for \$525 million (in today's dollars) to German Larrea, the scion of the multinational mining company Grupo Mexico, and currently the country's third-richest man. His family's estimated net worth is \$7.3 billion. Their assets include not only mining interests in Mexico and Peru, but also Mexico's largest railroad company and its second-largest movie theater chain.

Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, then-leader of the leftist Democratic Revolutionary Party, called the sale a "clear aggression against workers."

Miners and their supporters resisted Cananea's privatization with widespread protests. But on Aug. 20, 1989, federal

troops marched in. The mine was closed for three months, and when the union and company finally negotiated a reopening, hundreds of jobs were cut, including that of Verdugo's father.

The union says its bargaining power and strength have dwindled since privatization, and that workers in Cananea's mine today suffer one of the highest accident rates in the country.

In April 2007, a study by the Berkeley, Calif.-based Maquiladora Health and Safety Support Network found "dozens of safety hazards on the site," including disconnected dust collectors that allowed rock dust at 10 times the government's legal limit. The dust causes silicosis—the terminal disease that killed Verdugo's father.

The report also found electrical panels lacking protective covers; floors with gaping holes and no warning signs; and

grease-slicked catwalks covered with hoses, which workers say have caused dozens of injuries and even death.

"The conditions were horrendous—the worst I've ever seen in my travels," says Dr. Robert Cohen, an occupational respiratory health expert at Chicago's county hospital, who visited Cananea in October 2007 as part of an international delegation of doctors and union workers.

A miner's life

Decades ago, Verdugo's siblings and relatives headed across the border to Tucson, Ariz., in search of better jobs. But Verdugo stayed in Mexico with his parents. He made it through the sixth grade, and shined shoes and sold newspapers to contribute to the family's income.

In 1996, Verdugo got a job as an electrical mechanic in the mine. Two years later, the company threatened massive layoffs, and hundreds of miners went on strike. After three months, the federal Conciliation and Arbitration Board (CAB), declared the strike illegal, as it does most labor actions.

The workers refused to accept the CAB decision and Grupo Mexico threatened to call in federal troops to reopen the mine by force. It also promptly laid off and black-listed 800 workers. The following year, it stopped funding the workers' health clinic.

Tensions boiled over in February 2006, after an explosion at Grupo Mexico's Pasta de Conchos mine—in the northern state of Coahuila—left 65 miners dead. The union's General Secretary Napoleón Gómez Urrutia accused the company of "industrial homicide," saying that the company had ignored workers' continued complaints about dangerous gas leaks.

After the tragedy, the government charged Gómez Urrutia with fraudulent use of union funds. Gómez Urrutia, who denies the charges, fled to Canada, where he continues as union leader while fighting extradition.

The strike begins

The July 30, 2007, strike began as workers became fed up with dwindling benefits and poor safety standards. Miners at Grupo Mexico mines in Zacatecas and Guerrero—two Mexican states—staged simultaneous strikes. Less than two months later, the

company closed its Guerrero mine. The strike continues at its Zacatecas mine.

Mexican labor law says work must stop during a legal strike, and workers have the right to control the facilities. But if a strike is ruled illegal, the company can forcefully reopen the facility and hire subcontractors.

In the beginning, the Cananea mine was shut down and workers maintained control. Union members hoped that by losing a reported \$3 million a day in profits, Grupo Mexico would be pushed to the bargaining table. But on Jan. 11, 2008, arbitrators at CAB ruled the strike illegal, claiming workers didn't follow proper procedure when they walked out.

In the predawn hours the next day, according to union leaders, helicopters began circling the town and hovering over union leaders' homes. Video taken by union members and posted online show tour buses unloading police in riot gear, roads jammed with police trucks with flashing lights and, later, clouds of tear gas billowing through narrow streets.

According to strikers, police fired rubber bullets and beat union members, as snipers pointed guns from police helicopters. Miners report that police arrested and detained seven union miners and family members, including women and children. For weeks, federal and local law enforcement occupied Cananea. Workers have dubbed Jan. 11 "Black Friday."

"[Police] detained and questioned our families as if we were narco-traffickers," says Fernando Juvera, a union member.

On Feb. 14, a Mexican court overturned the CAB's January ruling, allowing workers to continue the strike, but also allowing the company to continue operations. In March, federal safety inspectors visited Cananea, cataloguing the health and safety situation. Their report shows 265 violations, from lack of dust control to live electrical cables sitting in water.

Verdugo says Grupo Mexico has since made cursory improvements, but much work remains before he and fellow workers will return to the mine.

Shifting investments abroad

The soaring price of copper helped Grupo Mexico's shares rise during the strike's initial months, but by the second

quarter of 2008 the company reported a 15.8 percent drop from the same period last year. Despite the company's claims that the Cananea mine "has the longest remaining mine life of any major open-pit copper mine in the world, based on current production levels," in late April, Grupo Mexico threatened to shutter the mine because of the strike. It offered strikers severance packages, but the majority refused, claiming the company cannot legally shut down a mine during an unsettled strike.

Company officials say they are now focusing on Peru. Grupo Mexico is a majority owner of Southern Copper Co., which is the name it operates under outside of Mexico.

But Peruvian workers have lodged similar complaints against the company. In mid-June, miners in Moquegua—a southern region of Peru—went on strike, calling for better wages and protesting a government proposal to reduce the amount of mining royalties paid to workers. More than 20,000 people blockaded streets, staged hunger strikes and held massive rallies. On June 26, Peru's President Alan Garcia ordered local police to break up the demonstrations.

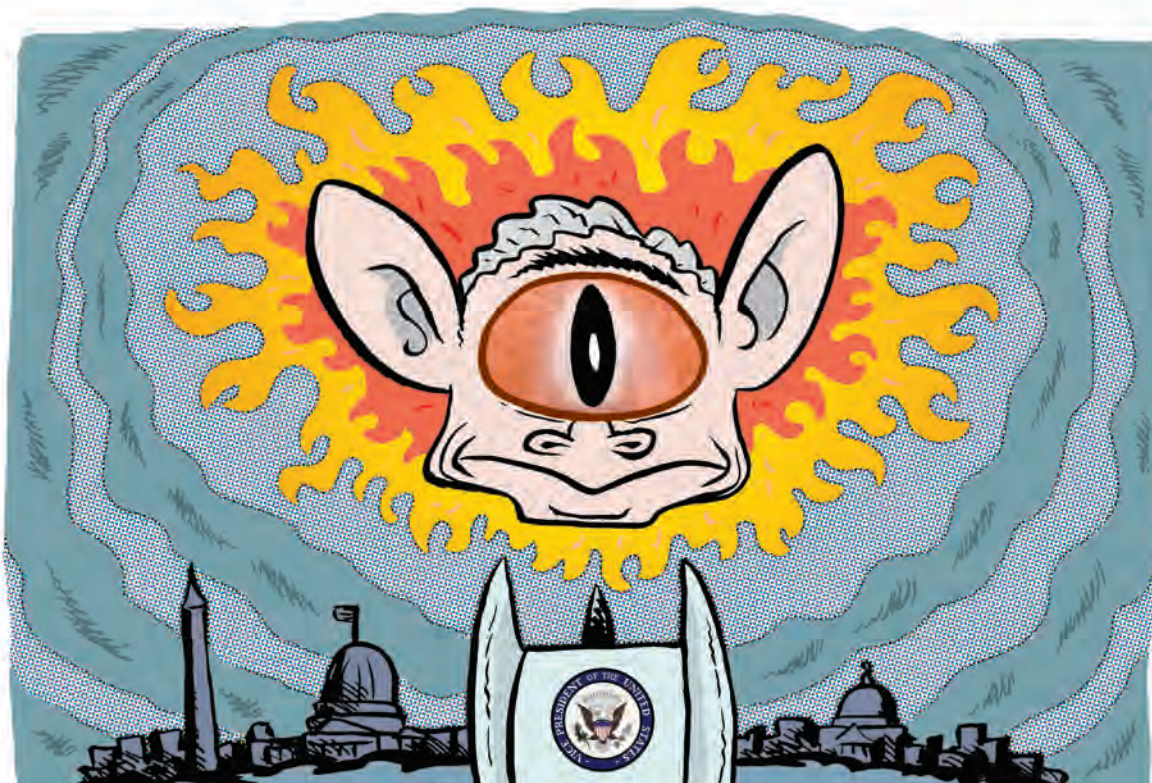
The Federation of Miners of Peru, which represents about 28,000 miners and 70 unions, soon joined the effort. In early July, the company accepted a general agreement that met the goals set by the Moquegua miners, although details are still being negotiated.

The Cananea miners see themselves, and their Peruvian counterparts, as engaged in a historic struggle for workers' rights, akin to the one that made Cananea the cradle of the Mexican Revolution more than a century ago.

"The businessmen would like to do away with all unions," says José Luis Minero, 64, who was 10 when his father was killed working in the mine. "But they underestimate us. We are doing this not just for our families, and not just for Cananea, but for workers everywhere."

Out of 1,300 workers who initiated the strike, almost 1,100 remain.

"We have dignity, bravery, we're in this together, and people from all over are supporting our struggle," Minero added. "We can't give in to the caprices of capitalism." ■



Feeding the Beast

In order to weaken federal agencies, the Bush administration has expanded them to the point of collapse

BY CHRISTOPHER MORAFF

WHEN PRESIDENT BUSH EXITS the White House in January, he will leave behind a federal government in shambles.

Since his first term, Bush has pressed forward with a radical view of the executive branch. Beyond adopting autocratic positions on foreign policy and taking broad liberties to subvert the Bill of Rights, Bush has waged a quieter—and perhaps more damaging—war at home against the very agencies under his charge.

From formaldehyde-soaked FEMA trailers, tainted pharmaceuticals and politically motivated firings of U.S. attorneys, to allegations of retaliation against government whistleblowers and an exodus of career officials from key regulatory positions, the Bush administration has lorded over a highly politicized and increasingly ineffective federal bureaucracy.

Policy analysts and legal scholars paint a picture of an executive intent on controlling every aspect of the federal bureaucracy, in particular the agencies tasked with regulating industry and commerce.

Taken as a whole, the president's rejection of international law and his consolidation of administrative oversight are representative of a decades-long effort by conservatives to implement a so-called "unitary executive theory"—a euphemism for virtually unlimited presidential power.

But for such a creation to succeed, the executive must assert its influence over all aspects of government, from the top down, through the ranks of the roughly 3 million civilian employees that today work in government jobs at more than 100 agencies and sub-agencies.

Even his detractors say this is something Bush has been especially adept at.

"Despite their ineptitude in a lot of

other areas and how poor they are at governing, one of the things the Bush administration has been very good at is using administrative mechanisms to control policy outcomes," says Rick Melberth, director of regulatory policy at the nonpartisan watchdog group OMB Watch.

Bush didn't invent this theory, but regulatory experts say his administration has worked harder than any other to perfect it.

"I have worked on regulatory issues inside the Beltway since 1976, and have watched five presidents come and go," says Rena Steinzor, president of the Center for Progressive Reform and a professor at University of Maryland Law School. "The Bush administration is the most hostile and aggressive toward these agencies by a couple of orders of magnitude, making the Reagan era look relatively benign."

Steinzor says the next president will face a daunting task in putting the house

back in order: “No matter who is elected in November, it will take years to repair this damage.”

The damage is evident in almost every federal agency and characterized most visibly by dwindling morale among career civil servants. None have suffered more than those in the scientific community, which has been forced to confront a growing cadre of inexperienced political appointees bent on pursuing a pro-business agenda.

An April survey conducted by the Union of Concerned Scientists found that nearly two-thirds of responding Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) scientists said they experienced political interference with their work.

“Politics is injected and elevated into decisions where science and rational judgment should prevail,” Melberth says. “Politics supersedes scientific and technical information that is critical to protecting our environment and health and safety at home and in the workplace.”

What’s more, research by political science professor David E. Lewis of Vanderbilt University shows that politicization results in lower agency competence and that political appointee-run programs earn systematically lower grades in most management areas.

Says Lewis: “Many of the politicization scandals in this administration came from cases where unqualified or inexperienced people got into key jobs ... often with the power to hire others or control information flows.”

Congress seeks answers

Since the Democrats took back Congress in 2006, numerous hearings have examined the extent to which political policy has penetrated rulemaking.

Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.), chair of the House Committee on Oversight & Government Reform, has been investigating the growth and influence of political appointees in federal agencies—in particular their interference with scientific research. Among the committee’s findings is that—despite Republicans’ oft-stated disdain for bloated government—the number of such appointees has actually expanded under Bush.

During his first term, federal jobs avail-

able to political appointees rose 15 percent, according to the 2004 edition of the “Plum Book,” which Congress publishes after each presidential election to list open positions.

In fact, in the first five years of the Bush administration, the total number of political appointees grew by 307—or 12 per-

cent—according to a 2006 report released by Waxman’s committee. At the same time, the number of Schedule C appointees—who are exempt from confirmation or qualification review—increased 33 percent during Bush’s first term.

In one of the more egregious examples, Bush appointed George Deutsch as NASA press officer in 2005. Deutsch, a then 24-year-old former Bush campaign staffer with no relevant scientific training, fell under fire almost immediately for attempting to censor the agency’s scientists. Most notably, he instructed senior scientists to refer to “the Big Bang” as a “theory,” and he tried to restrict scientists’ access to the media. He resigned in 2006 when it was revealed that he had lied on his resume about graduating from college.

But as the federal workforce has grown larger, it hasn’t gotten more done. Just the opposite: An analysis conducted by the *Washington Post* at the end of Bush’s first term found that since he took office, federal agencies had begun roughly one-quarter fewer regulations than President Clinton and 13 percent fewer than Bush’s father during their first terms.

Paul Light, a Brookings Institution fellow and author of *A Government Ill Executed: The Decline of the Federal Service and How to Reverse It*, refers to this tactic as the “thickening” of government.

“Despite the president’s promise to bring business-like thinking to the federal government, the Bush administration has overseen, or at least permitted, a significant expansion of both the height

and width of the federal hierarchy,” Light says. “There have never been more layers at the top of government, nor more occupants at each layer.”

For Bush, the slowing of the federal machine has been less about manipulating regulatory output and more about sabotaging the machine itself.

For Bush, the slowing of the federal bureaucracy has been less about manipulating regulatory output—although there’s been plenty of that—and more about sabotaging the machine itself.

Rep. Danny Davis (D-Ill.), who chairs the subcommittee that oversees the federal workforce, says that while he respects the authority of the executive branch to follow and implement certain policy initiatives, the Bush administration may have crossed an ethical line.

“We’ve been particularly concerned that some of the scientific community is being co-opted by political manipulation, and that policy is being presented as fact,” Davis says.

At the end of July, Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.)—chair of the House Judiciary Committee—held a hearing to take inventory of what he called the Bush “imperial presidency.” He noted a laundry list of administration shenanigans: improper politicization of the Justice Department and the U.S. attorneys’ offices; misuse of executive branch authority (including unitary executive theory); misuse of presidential regulatory authority; and improper retaliation against administration critics.

A brief history of the unitary executive

The modern concept of a unitary executive was formalized during President Reagan’s first term, largely through the efforts of then-Attorney General Ed Meese. At its heart, the theory asserts the supremacy of the executive branch and the role of president as chief executive officer with unilateral authority over the workings of the regulatory functions of government.

Reagan codified this so-called “centralized regulatory review” through two

sweeping executive orders that essentially gave the White House the power over regulatory policy—from inception to planning to final implementation.

In 1981, Reagan issued Executive Order No. 12291, which gave the newly created Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) the power to review all federal regulations, and introduced cost-benefit analysis and risk assessment to the regulatory process. A division of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB)—the executive agency charged with overseeing all federal agencies—OIRA became a liaison between regulatory officials and the Office of the President.

At the start of his second term, Reagan issued another executive order, No. 12498, that took centralized review even further, requiring regulatory agencies to submit an annual statement of “policies, goals and objectives” to ensure agency plans were in line with administration objectives.

OMB Watch’s Melberth says that under Reagan, the agency became known as a “black hole” where proposed regulation disappeared, never to be seen again.

“The power to coordinate information collection and to review proposed final regulations in a policy office of the White House made OMB the equivalent of a political censor over agency actions,” he says.

Melberth, a former law professor, says

it got worse during George H.W. Bush’s presidency, when regulatory review was placed under the authority of the Council on Competitiveness, which Melberth describes as a “highly centralized reviewing authority, cloaked in secrecy.”

When Bill Clinton took office in 1993, Melberth says Clinton eased some of the restrictions of the previous Republican administrations, issuing Executive Order 12866, which limited centralized review to the most significant rules. Clinton also mandated that each agency head appoint a regulatory policy officer who would report directly to the agency head, a relationship that would undergo significant changes during the second Bush administration.

When Bush was elected president in 2000, conservatives saw an opportunity to put the unitary executive back in place. In January 2001, Robert Moffit, director of the conservative Heritage Foundation’s Center for Health Policy Studies and a former Reagan OMB official, was finishing a policy paper articulating the bureaucratic vision of a unified executive. The president must “protect his right to select appointees based not only on their managerial prowess but also on their commitment to his policy agenda and their ability to advance, articulate and defend it,” Moffit wrote.

In a list of objectives, Moffit insisted that Bush should resist advice to leave career-

ists in top spots during the first days of his administration; increase the number of Schedule C (nonconfirmed) appointments; hire noncareer personnel on the basis of their commitment to his policy agenda; and protect his appointive power against congressional encroachments.

Lastly, Moffit suggested the administration review noncareer-to-career conversions in order to prevent Clinton appointees from integrating into career positions. Ironically, as Bush prepares to leave office, his own appointees are reportedly engaged in exactly this behavior.

Bush quickly put this plan into action. In 2002, he made changes to Clinton’s Executive Order 12866, giving more oversight authority to the OMB. In a congressional report that year, OIRA referred to itself as “the gatekeeper for new rulemakings.”

Throughout his tenure, Bush has used legal sleights-of-hand to apply the unitary executive and circumvent legislative authority, such as issuing “signing statements,” which are a written comments issued by a president at the time of signing legislation that signal his intent to ignore certain aspects of it. He rejected long-held international standards on the treatment of detainees. And he showed utter disregard for the Bill of Rights, exemplified by his domestic spying program that authorized the National Security Agency to eavesdrop on U.S. citizens and foreign nationals in the United States.

But Melberth says that when it comes to regulatory matters, the Bush administration’s masterstroke was its ability to open doors to elite, corporate interests with little regard for the consequences.

“One of the things this administration is going to be most known for is that they provided a lot of special access for business interests,” Melberth says. “They’ve allowed an unprecedented level of involvement by private interests in creating political policy with regard to regulation, with regard to rules—their energy policy, their greenhouse gas policy, all of that.”

In January 2007, Bush tightened his grip on the federal bureaucracy when he issued Executive Order 13422, which made three particularly worrisome changes to the Clinton-era document.

First, the order mandated that a regula-

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tory policy officer (RPO) approve all new regulations. Second, it made these RPOs presidential appointees. (They were previously chosen by the agency head.) And third, the new language requires agencies to identify the “specific market failure” that any new regulation will address.

In other words, before a new regulation can be adopted, it must be shown that free market forces are somehow failing to address the problem, and then an administration policy officer must approve it.

By controlling regulatory officers, Brookings’ Light says the Bush administration has put a “political watchdog” on the inside. With the stroke of a pen, Bush has effectively usurped control of all government rulemaking.

The free-market regulator

Less than four months after signing Executive Order 13422, Bush appointed Susan Dudley as head of OIRA during a congressional recess in April. (The consumer group Public Citizen had spent the previous year fighting the appointment, decrying Dudley as an “anti-regulation zealot.”)

Dudley’s background made her a strange choice. Prior to her nomination, she directed the Regulatory Studies Program at the Mercatus Center, a free-market think tank that advocates limited government regulation. In a 2005 Mercatus policy brief, Dudley referred to regulations as “a hidden tax on Americans.”

The think tank—which receives funding from ExxonMobil—has been criticized for downplaying the risks associated with global warming. Several months after Dudley’s appointment, Mercatus issued a white paper defending Executive Order 13422.

Seven months before her recess appointment, Public Citizen, together with OMB Watch, issued a 68-page report on Dudley, highlighting positions she has taken against the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA), the EPA and the Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC).

“Not since OIRA was created ... has there been a less appropriate nominee,” Gary D. Bass, OMB Watch executive director, said in the report.

Supporters of Dudley’s appointment, including Heritage Foundation’s Senior Fellow on Regulatory Policy James Gattuso,

vigorously defended her, while simultaneously confirming the basic premise of her critics’ concern.

“Dudley’s work shows that she is not so much prejudiced against regulation as wary of it,” he wrote in a 2006 Heritage Foundation paper. “Dudley will bring to the job a wariness of new rules and an expertise in analyzing rules’ likely effects, both of which are appropriate, even essential.”

By controlling regulatory officers, the Bush administration has put a ‘political watchdog’ on the inside. With the stroke of a pen, Bush has usurped control of all government rulemaking.

Untangling the knot

Whoever takes over the White House will face the monumental task of undoing some 30 years of bureaucratic layering that has seen the number of political appointees grow from 400 in 1961, to roughly 3,000 today. In a recent article for the *Politico*, Light warned that unless the next president begins fixing government, he will preside over “a string of meltdowns that will make the federal response to Hurricane Katrina look like a minor mistake.”

Many legal scholars, including Frederick Schwarz Jr., senior counsel of NYU Law School’s Brennan Center for Justice, say the problems extend beyond the Bush administration. They argue that the executive branch needs a complete overhaul.

Schwarz recommends establishing an investigatory commission—similar to the Church Committee of the ’70s that looked into illegal intelligence activities—to begin the process of unraveling the bureaucracy.

Vanderbilt’s Lewis agrees. He says the first thing a new president should do is commission a study of the federal personnel system to recommend how best to keep flexibility while also maintaining control and fairness.

“I would promote more career professionals into key positions. Not enough use is being made of civil servants,” says Lewis. “The civil service was created to provide expert and continuous management of government. The increase in appointees has hurt both the cultivation of expertise

and the continuity of management.”

Unfortunately, what was already an unwieldy machine before Bush took office has since been completely broken. And by many accounts, in its last months, the administration is seeking to make it worse.

Some appointees are scrambling to push through last-minute regulation changes. At the end of July, the *Washington Post*

reported on the Labor Department’s effort to push through rules making it harder to regulate workers’ on-the-job exposure to chemicals and toxins.

Others are working their way into career positions. Known as “burrowing,” this has some legislators worried. In a recent letter to Attorney General Michael Mukasey, Sens. Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) and Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) urged officials at the Justice Department to ensure that political appointees not improperly fill jobs intended for nonpartisan professionals.

“We don’t need ideological stowaways undermining the work of the next administration,” Schumer wrote.

Their concerns are well-founded. On July 28, the Justice Department Inspector General concluded an investigation that found agency political appointees—including former aide Monica Goodling—engaged in misconduct and broke civil service laws by hiring and firing agency personnel based on political philosophy.

Whether Sens. John McCain (R-Ariz.) or Barack Obama (D-Ill.) have the political will to reform the federal bureaucracy remains to be seen. For her part, University of Maryland’s Steinzor believes things can only get better.

“The history of these issues demonstrates that, at some point, the pendulum reaches a limit in its rightward swing,” she says. “I think that point passed about two years ago, and that it has already begun to swing back. How long it will take to traverse the arc is the real question.” ■

BY PETE REDINGTON

A People's Historian of Sports

It's easy to see sports today as nothing more than an escapist distraction, an uncomfortable marriage of commercialism and entertainment. But progressive journalist and rabid sports fan Dave Zirin has a different take. Sports, he shows us, can be, and always have been a stage of

social conflict, too.

Zirin "tackles" the notion shared by many left-wingers like author Noam Chomsky, who once observed that "sports keeps people from worrying about things that matter to their lives that they might have some idea of doing something about."

But Chomsky, Zirin counters, fails to understand "how the very passion we invest in sports can transform it from a kind of mindless escape into a site of resistance. Sports can become an arena where the ideas of our society are not just presented but also challenged. Just as sports can reflect the dominant ideas of our society," Zirin contends, "they can also reflect struggle."

Zirin's new book, *A People's History of Sports in the United States: 250 Years of Politics, Protest, People and Play*, is a tour-de-force through the events of that struggle for social justice within the sporting arena, showcasing innumerable moments of resistance against racism, sexism, heterosexism and classism.

He also writes a weekly column called *The Edge Of Sports* (www.edgeofsports.com), which contains discussions on topics ranging from publicly funded stadiums, to steroids and poverty, to racism and professional basketball.

For progressive sports fans who find it difficult, if not impossible, to compartmentalize the political and athletic sides

of their personalities, the work of Dave Zirin is a blessing. As hip-hop historian Jeff Chang notes, "Once you read him, you'll never see sports the same way again."

It seems like there is a new story where issues of racism, sexism or classism intersect with sports every day. Hurricane Katrina and the use of FEMA money to re-open the Louisiana Superdome. Former Sen. George Mitchell's report on steroids in Major League Baseball. Radio host Don Imus calling the Rutgers University women's basketball team a bunch of "nappy-headed hos." You're one of the only journalists covering this angle. Why is that?

The number one reason, I think, is that so much of the sports media, as an institution, is tied into having access to the running of teams. And with that comes a knee-jerk approach that is resistant to politics. And it's certainly resistant to any kind of left-wing critique of sports.

But usually not to right-wing politics in sports.

Right. That's what's so interesting about it, because they're only too quick to amplify every sounding board for issues like militarism, patriotism, stadium funding, some of the worst ideas in our society. But as soon as an athlete or an alternative voice or a fan movement tries to express something else, then the knee-jerk can be pretty strong.

The question itself is a really sad commentary on things. Where are the

writers? Because there's this whole generation of brilliant, transgressive sports writers who came out in the late '60s, like Robert Lipsyte and Leonard Schechter. And these are all people very influenced by the social upheavals of the '60s, and a lot of them came of age by following the career of boxing legend Muhammad Ali.

These guys to me are like the SDS [Students for a Democratic Society], the Black Panthers of sports writing, but nothing is written about them. I think maybe that more people would do this kind of writing if they knew they were part of a tradition.

These are some of your influences, your heroes?

Yeah, but Ralph Wiley is truly a hero of mine. There's a whole group of writers who consider themselves the children of Ralph Wiley, who was one of the first prominent African-American sports writers who didn't write just for the black press.

What publications did he write for?

Sports Illustrated. Just a prodigiously gifted writer. And very political. He wrote a terrific book called *Why Black Men Tend to Shout*, about more than just sports. Even in the title of that book you see critical analysis, because that's what Wiley always wanted to look at. If somebody is being obnoxious, why are they being obnoxious? If somebody feels they need to be a prima donna, like [Dallas Cowboys receiver] Terrell Owens, he wants to ask why. [Baseball slugger] Barry Bonds hates the media, so he asks, "Why does Barry Bonds hate the media?" If [Rutgers Women's Basketball Coach] Vivian Stringer gave a 30-minute speech to the media, he says, "Well, what is it that she has to say that took 30 minutes?" And that's the kind of thinking you don't get in a lot of sports writing.

Dave Zirin: not your average sports fan.

It seems much more respectful.

Absolutely. The ultimate respect is to take someone's ideas seriously and to analyze them critically.

Reminds me of the NBA dress code, where Commissioner David Stern decreed that all players who are injured or otherwise unable to play in a basketball game had to dress in corporate-casual attire. In *A People's History of Sports*, you highlight the tumultuous relationship between the NBA and hip-hop culture, talking about the Bronx, the early '80s, the financial struggles of the NBA, and the Reagan administration. How do you view this relationship?

I think it's heading on a trajectory of further straining relations between players and management. David Stern has made it clear that the league is going to be hypersensitive to what he refers to as "gangster culture," or "hip-hop culture." He uses the words interchangeably, without realizing how profoundly offensive that is. When you break it all down to thuggish behavior, it becomes a form of racial profiling. We determine that you're a criminal element based on the way that you dress, or the way that you talk. The message is being sent clearly, and that

message has a lot of cultural cachet. The league, and Stern in particular, plays these megalomaniacal, Commissioner Kipling games at his own peril.

Where do you see this relationship going over the next few years?

I see it becoming more and more strained, which is a damn shame.

There's been this shifting class element as far as who can actually afford to go to games now. And that's really changed in recent years. The trajectory of ticket prices and how much they cost now compared to 10 or 20 years ago, the exclusive corporate seating. When they build these new publicly funded stadiums, there's an emphasis on the hyper-expensive, with a lot of perks, loge seating and luxury boxes.

Reading *A People's History of Sports*, it's easy to look back at watershed moments of the past, whether it's the 1968 Olympics with track stars Juan Carlos and Tommie Smith giving the Black Panther salute on the medal stand, or the tennis match in which Billy Jean King defeated Bobby Riggs amid the women's movement in the '70s. What are some historic moments of the last five or 10 years?

Fall of 1996, when Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf refused to come out for the national anthem. That was huge.

Was he playing professional basketball at this point, or still in college?

No, he was in the NBA. In college he was still Chris Jackson. Then he converted to Islam, and took it very seriously.

I think when Toni Smith, the woman basketball player from Manhattanville, N.Y., turned her back to the flag [during the national anthem], that was very important.

And [professional basketball player] Sheryl Swoops coming out of the closet was huge. I think she's the most prominent African-American woman, and the most prominent athlete, period, to ever come out of the closet.

No guy has ever come out while playing, yet, I don't believe.

That's true. And that's the interesting thing about sports, that throughout its history, it's been this slow dance between commerce and self-expression. Both of these ideas are very counterpoised, but they work side by side. Long-term, it's untenable. You're going to see either the entire sports world take a huge step backward, or you're going to see more athletes come out, flex their political muscles and eventually break through. And we'll have not only happier athletes, but also better games.

You see this happening over the next 10 to 20 years?

I think for the first time in a generation, you're starting to see athletes begin to express themselves politically. We are starting to see some movement.

The question for me is—and I could list about a dozen athletes who have said stuff against the war—are they actually going to organize? Because that's the thing holding it back right now. That they speak as individuals, or they speak for groups who have nothing to do with sports.

We need a Jocks For Justice.

We need an Athletes United For Peace.

We need people actually sitting in a room together and talking about how they can have each other's backs.

And I think if they take that step, then you could see some serious cultural ramifications. ■



Kimberly Roberts and Scott Roberts outside their flood-damaged home in New Orleans.

THROUBLETHEWATERFILM.COM

BY JONATHAN ROSENBAUM

As Tough As Tom Joad

I can't quite follow the offscreen sound bites preceding the main title of Tia Lessin and Carl Deal's new documentary, *Trouble the Water*. But from the media voices I *can* transcribe, it's clear they succinctly present the film's agenda. At the same

time, we see the inter-title "September 14th 2005/ Central Louisiana" appear onscreen and get the first glimpse of the people who'll become the documentary's central characters, seated around a picnic table.

Two of the offscreen voices come from President Bush. The others come from newscasters or interviewees:

1. "About 300,000 people displaced by Katrina have been scattered to at least a dozen states."
2. "Surviving Katrina was one thing; now people are just trying to survive the aftermath."
3. "[inaudible] ... evacuees were rolling in ..."
4. "It's been called the largest migration in the country since the Dust Bowl of the 1930s."
5. Bush: "I don't think anybody anticipated the

breach of the levees."

6. "For years officials have warned that the levees *could* break."
7. "I don't believe for one minute that anybody allowed people to suffer because they were African Americans."
8. "[inaudible] ... had the same reaction that they were all white people."
9. Bush: "We've got a job to defend this country in the war on terror and we got a job to bring aid and comfort to the people of the Gulf Coast, and we'll do both."

The first four statements evoke *The Grapes of Wrath* and its celebration of heroism, survival and community. In fact, the two most important char-

acters in this real-life saga—24-year-old Kimberly Roberts and her husband, Scott, heroic residents of New Orleans’ 9th Ward—register, at times, as updated versions of Ma Joad and Tom Joad, even though Steinbeck’s duo are mother and son, not wife and husband, and white, not African American.

The final five sound bites seem devoted to exposing or countering the lies and denials in #5, #7 and #9, particularly those stemming from Bush. One could hypothesize that the key turning point in many Americans’ perception of Bush—a shift in his image from heroic warrior to inept, hypocritical poseur—was in 2005, following the TV coverage of Hurricane Katrina and its devastating aftermath. The wholly inadequate ways Katrina was officially anticipated made the government’s indifference to large portions of the population both palpable and inescapable.

The follow-up perception—that you can’t be a warrior without an actual war (as opposed to a couple of metaphorical ones)—has regrettably been much slower in forming, thanks to a deceitful media vocabulary that uses “war on terror” to stand for broad security measures and “war in Iraq” to stand for a military occupation. This makes it easier to postulate a war that can only be waged permanently—without any clear definition, much less hope, of victory. (This was at least obliquely clarified when the *New York Times* recently rejected an Op-Ed by Sen. John McCain for its failure to pinpoint what a victory in Iraq might entail.)

We can see the sort of “aid and comfort” Bush had in mind when we hear about Naval officers preventing Kimberly, Scott and their neighbors—at gunpoint—from finding even temporary shelter from the flood in a closed but dry naval base with 200 empty family-housing units and more than 500 evacuated rooms.

“We had to do our job and protect the interests of the government,” one of those officers in the documentary explains.

And if this leaves any doubt about whose government he’s referring to, the commendation Bush subsequently gave those officers for “defusing a potentially

violent confrontation” should clear that matter up. After Kimberly laughingly describes having been treated as “un-American, like we lost our citizenship,” one of her Memphis relatives remarks: “If you don’t have money, if you don’t have status, you don’t have a government.”

Having survived drug-related pasts, they regard the loss of their worldly possessions and several loved ones and the government’s lack of concern as lesser setbacks they can triumph over.

Ironically, it was the National Guard’s public relations team that inadvertently helped set the agenda of *Trouble the Water*. Flying to Louisiana a week after Katrina struck, Lessin and Deal—producers of *Fahrenheit 9/11* and veterans of other Michael Moore documentaries—originally wanted to film the return of National Guard troops from Baghdad to New Orleans. But the public relations people blocked their access, reportedly saying, “*Fahrenheit 9/11* screwed it up for all you guys.”

Even though some vestiges of their initial plan remain in the film, Lessin and Deal luckily met Kimberly—an aspiring rap artist under the alias Black Kold Madina—soon afterward. Kimberly had bought a cheap video camera shortly before the storm hit and had documented her immediate experiences. So the producers-directors decided to let her story—her raw footage and their recounting of her further adventures—become their focus.

As storytelling, the approach has certain glitches. The film keeps cutting between Kimberly’s free-wheeling footage (supplemented by various smooth TV news reports) and Lessin and Deal’s footage, which either documents or retraces subsequent events (such as Kimberly and Scott driving a truck full of evacuees to a town in northeast Louisiana, or eventually returning from her cousin’s place in Memphis to their old neighborhood in the 9th Ward). As a result, some plot details remain fuzzy. Even after two viewings, I’m still not clear how they acquired the truck.

But as a portrait of the couple and their extended family—including two dogs, a cat and various relatives and neighbors—*Trouble the Water* is wonderful. And what it says about whom you can trust in a crisis if you’re poor and black couldn’t be more lucid and direct.

Evidently it’s *this* underlying message that prompted some potential distributors at Sundance to shy away from the film, even after it won the Grand Jury Prize there, with the reported complaint that it was “too black” and didn’t have enough white people in it.

But the issue is less about the absence of white people in the film than about their placement in the slicker sections. The single most hilariously shocking bit is a musical commercial for New Orleans tourism made just before Katrina hit, enthusiastically hawked by a young white woman. While the ad shows a few black musicians playing Dixieland, the white dominance of the band and its audience is so glaring that no commentary is needed.

Part of what makes Kimberly, Scott and their friend Brian so positive, generous and indestructible is that they have managed to overcome drug-related pasts, which they talk—and, in Kimberly’s case, rap—about. To their credit, having survived that particular disaster, they miraculously seem to regard the loss of their worldly possessions and several loved ones, the government’s callous lack of concern and its ineffectuality, and the subsequent profiteering of mercenaries as lesser setbacks they can somehow triumph over.

This ultimately makes *Trouble the Water* more uplifting than depressing—a timely reminder that, as Ma Joad said at the end of *The Grapes of Wrath*, “We’re the people that live. Can’t nobody wipe us out. Can’t nobody lick us. . . . We’re the people.” ■

Class Not Dismissed

By Jean Forst

NEW YORK ISN'T the only city that never sleeps. Across America, many educators spend restless nights wondering how to revive urban school systems. We meet some of them in *City Kids, City Schools: More Reports from the Front Row* (The New Press, August), the much-anticipated companion to *City Kids, City Teachers* (1996).

Central themes in the new book include the link between poverty and the achievement gap, and—unsurprisingly—teachers' struggles against the Bush administration's No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Readers will also learn some education theory, as well as useful information about employment disparities between people of color and whites, budget cuts, and other problems facing the U.S. education system—and what people are doing about them.

But *City Kids, City Schools*—edited by William Ayers, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Gregory Michie and Pedro A. Noguera—is not a dry academic text to be consulted by masters' students trolling for a thesis topic. It's peppier than that.

Contributors use a variety of genres—including poetry and fiction—to pull together a collection of inspiring tales.

One essay from renowned education reformer Jonathan Kozol examines espresso-sipping parents who doubt that increasing funding to failing schools solves anything, yet spend small fortunes to send their children to private schools like Exeter.

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) teacher Katie Hogan's essay tells of her success as she, along with 11 other colleagues at Curie Metropolitan High School, refused to give students a confusing test that was the city's variation of the NCLB-mandated state exam. Their stance compelled the CPS—a system controlled by the powerful Mayor Richard M. Daley—to jettison the test.

In another essay, Pauline Lipman, a University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) professor, critiques vocational tracking and sounds the alarm on Daley's vision for a global city, which includes education-to-career academies within CPS. Lipman writes that while technical train-

ing is not inherently restrictive and can sometimes lead to college, it often makes it more difficult for students to jump the track they're placed on. She's right to demand that CPS—and other school systems—rethink this structure.

William Ayers, a professor of education at UIC and a former member of the Weather Underground, introduces the "City Kids" section by humanizing the teenagers who too frequently get stereotyped as promiscuous, violent, lazy, drug dealers. The section includes Sampson Davis' personal account of growing up poor in Newark, N.J. Here, Davis tells of a pact he made with two teenage friends to become doctors—a goal he reached under the direction of a martial arts teacher and a strict mother who demanded good grades.

Angela Valenzuela, an associate professor at the University of Texas-Austin, writes about meeting a young student in Houston named Nelda, whose working-class mother instilled in her a love of reading that led Nelda to ponder lands lost in the Mexican-American War. This, in turn, inspires within her a Chicana identity and ignites a passion for academic achievement.

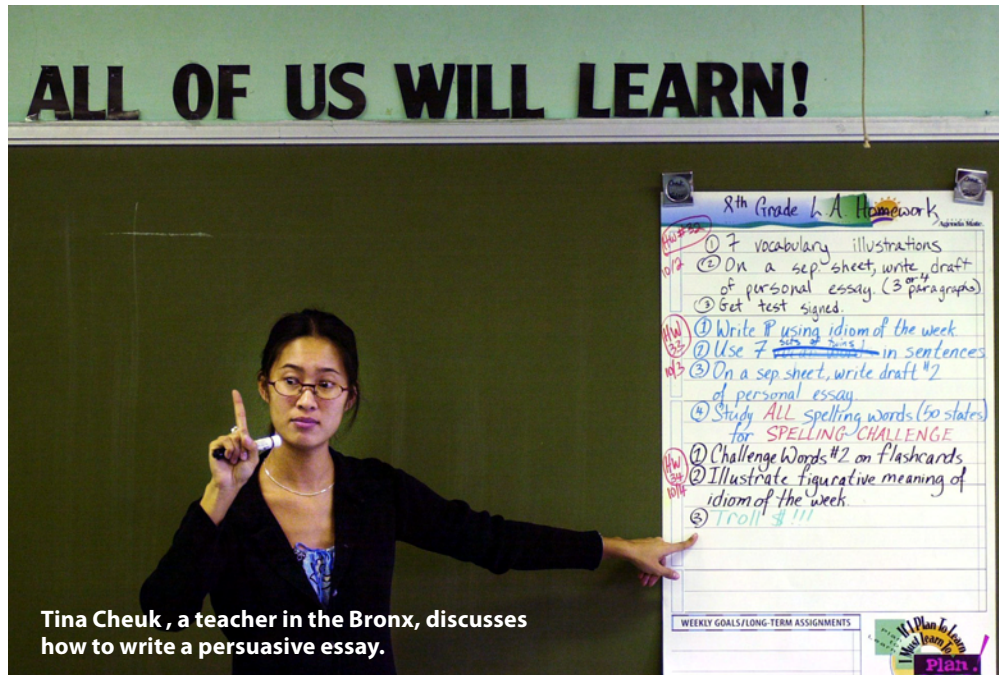
We also enter classrooms, where we meet Linda Christensen, a student who changed the culture at her Portland high school classroom after the year began with fellow classmates mocking Asian accents, laughing when another student was beaten bloody, and bullying a "clumsy" classmate who had retinitis pigmen-

tosa, a degenerative eye disease.

City Kids, City Schools is a hopeful book with sober-minded suggestions for reform. Still, the anthology frequently invokes racism and poverty as fatalistic forces, and the government as the lone savior. Such indictments suggest a fear that these problems will remain if they receive anything less than a blunt focus.

What's missing from this argument, though, is the student's role in his or her education. Too often, kids emerge from these pages as impossibly good. While this can be a relief from the usual stereotype of these teenagers as sociopathic, it's a simplistic characterization. Focusing solely on the effort a child puts into school might invoke the conservative moralizing on personal responsibility, but there's no denying that individual effort does correlate with academic success.

One route to success in city schools is a productive, sustained connection between the lower and middle classes. With rare exception, though, *City Kids, City Schools* is ambiguous on the desirability of moving into the middle class. Teacher Gregory Michie writes about a former student named Lourdes, whose parents saved money earned from restaurant jobs to move from a predominantly Mexican enclave in Chicago into a mostly white middle-class neighborhood. The move makes Lourdes unhappy. She writes that in her old neighborhood, "[Y]ou're around Mexican people, you're outside, there's a lot of people out, there's traffic, a lot of activ-



Tina Cheuk, a teacher in the Bronx, discusses how to write a persuasive essay.

ity. I'm a people person. I like being around where there's a lot of people." Michie writes that, to Lourdes, her new community seems "sterile, bland and lifeless by comparison."

While Lourdes' culture shock is understandable, this perspective comes close to romanticizing the *barrio*, and fails to note how exposure to different social classes can be desirable.

It is through such contact that middle-class habits are made visible and accessible. This can propel city kids into the professional class by allowing them to adopt middle-class behaviors, and by giving them access to "the social networks and dominant cultural capital" that UIC's Lipman identifies as one of many "hidden advantages of middle-class white students."

But overall, *City Kids, City Schools* inspires readers to hit the books and the pavement in search of solutions.

Class is most definitely not dismissed. ■

BOOKS

The Mess is the Message

By Adam Doster

SINCE HURRICANE KATRINA ravaged the Gulf Coast in 2005, the president's approval rating has hovered around a paltry 30 percent.

Speaking to CNN's Wolf Blitzer in mid-July, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) expressed the sentiments of many Americans when she called President Bush's reign "a total failure."

Historians agree. In a survey conducted in April by the History News Network, 61 percent said Bush would go down as the nation's worst president.

But is everyone using the wrong metric for success? That's what cultural critic and best-selling author Thomas Frank argues in his new book *The Wrecking Crew: How Conservatives Rule* (Metropolitan, August

2008). It's misguided, Frank writes, to view the remarkable misgovernment of the past eight years—skyrocketing inequality and insecurity, the outsourcing of primary government functions, the demolition of the regulatory state, unprecedented corruption—as the practical failure of well-intentioned conservative policy prescriptions or the work of a few greedy public servants.

This period, rather, was a *triumph*, the apotheosis of a movement that fetishizes the free market, treats the business class as its primary constituent and views the liberal state as its *bête noire*.

"They have not done these awful things because they are bad conservatives," writes Frank. "They have done them because they are *good* conservatives."

In that sense, Bush is the exemplar of an approach to governance that simultaneously calls for less government in business and more business in government. Such was the official slogan of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the central theme of Warren Harding's 1921 inauguration ad-

[art space]



Double Exposure

"Double Exposure: African Americans Before and Behind the Camera" is an exhibition of historic and contemporary African-American photography and photo-based works.

Independent curators Lisa Henry and W. Frank Mitchell say they wanted to capture the legacy and reality of black experiences in the United States. The goal was to commemorate tradition and critique popular black mythos.

Historic works—including 19th century daguerrotypes and silver prints from the Amistad Center for Art and Culture—appear alongside mural-size digital prints, Polaroids and photos.

The collection looks at cultural appropriation, as well as the importance of family, identity and tradition.

The exhibit runs through Sept. 28 at the Museum of the African Diaspora (MoADSF.org) in San Francisco.

—Natasha Eziquiel-Shriro

dress. In fact, the mantra has served as the central tenet of American conservatism since its ideological naissane.

And while various progressive writers and thinkers have chronicled the failure of supply-side economics and the opportunism of the Beltway Bandits, Frank is the first to weave the two narratives together, providing the most comprehensive road map to date of the damage wrought by the Reagan Revolution.

While Frank's previous book, *What's the Matter with Kansas?*, focused on how conservatives win elections, *The Wrecking Crew* explores how they govern once in power.

Frank begins his story in 1892, with a letter from then-Attorney General Richard Olney to an unnamed railroad magnate. The mogul had written to Olney—a former railroad lawyer—asking whether he had any inclination to abolish the Interstate Commerce Commission, America's first regulatory agency. Olney reasoned that the agency could better protect the company's interests by acting as a buffer against hasty anti-corporate legislation. The key, he wrote, was “not to destroy the Commission, but to utilize it.”

The conservative movement ultimately embraced that instrumentalist governing strategy. When it regained power in the '80s, the movement re-branded itself as anti-establishment and pro-freedom, organizing those disaffected by the social movements of the '60s and '70s. Although the movement's leaders believed the state was immoral, they accepted that Americans *liked* big government and set about not to abolish the whole enterprise, but to “capture the thing and run it for [their] constituents' benefit,” as Frank writes.

And run it they did. After gaining traction in Congress and reminding Big Business that funding conservative activism could be profitable—there's no more cost-effective way to ram through corporate-friendly policies than to underwrite the work of conservative activists, magazines, think tanks and lobbying firms—conservatives began dismantling the central pillars of the liberal state.

The first step? Hollowing out the civil service by hiring incompetent but movement-friendly bureaucrats (i.e., the Justice



Creative destruction:
The Bush administration's
philosophy of government,
according to Thomas Frank's
The Wrecking Crew.

Department's Monica Goodling), driving down the wages of government service and outsourcing key government jobs to contractors with conservative bona fides (i.e., the military's Blackwater). In other words, if your aim is to build cynicism about government, it's best to ensure that the government sucks.

The next step comes with creating mechanisms to guarantee that politicians do Corporate America's bidding—by placing the regulatory state in the hands of those opposed to regulation. Not surprisingly, the agencies most hostile to business interests are those staffed with the most virulently doctrinaire. During his research, Frank stumbled across a pamphlet for schoolchildren entitled “A Day in the Life of a Regulated American Family.” The booklet presents a parable of draconian government interference meant to terrify young readers. Big Brother will inspect your food, regulate the radio and fiddle with your parent's car! The author was Susan Dudley, currently chief of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs.

Third, integrate lobbyists and Congress, a practice that has intensified since Reagan took office. And don't fool yourselves, Frank warns: Lobbying may be a bipartisan pastime, but it's “business pulling the levers of state.”

Finally, there's corruption, which for a movement that thinks Uncle Sam em-

bodies sleaze, doesn't care too much if legislators take a little off the top. In fact, it's win-win because, while your side gets paid, you delegitimize government in the process.

Conservatives will whine that Frank's analysis is too cynical, but those right wingers have themselves set the bar awfully low.

It's tough to defend a movement with connections to tyrants from South Africa's apartheid government to Angola's Jonas Savimbi—a guerrilla leader who valued free enterprise but prolonged his nation's civil war for 30 years—as anything but cynical opportunism. That's what happens when, as Frank notes, “the needs of business stand like a rock [and] all else is convenience.”

As a polemicist, Frank is at times prone to overgeneralization. Although he has no love for the Clinton administration, the lefty reformer tends to see the world through a purely materialist lens, using words like “conservative,” “lobbyist” and “business” almost interchangeably. That simplifies the diverse political coalitions that have emerged in the 21st century.

But as thoroughly as conservatives dismantled the regulatory state and botched reconstruction efforts in New Orleans and Baghdad, *The Wrecking Crew* eviscerates the cynical governing strategy that dominates “market-based” government. Frank does so with graceful prose and an acerbic,

charmingly old-timey wit that reads like it was ripped from the notebook of a crusading 1930s muckraker.

Just like the '30s, it might take financial disasters and major policy victories that address them (say, universal healthcare) to restore Americans' faith in government.

Thanks to Frank's book, progressives know what they're up against. ■

BOOKS

Unholy Allies

By Brian Cook

IN MARCH 2007, Al Gore triumphantly returned to the Senate to testify before the Environmental Committee about the imperative of acting to stop global warming. It was mostly a calm and cordial affair until the infamous climate-change denier, Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.), received his time to ask questions. He used it to harass, harangue and pester Gore, demanding to know how global warming could be real when Oklahoma had just experienced a very cold winter.

Faced with this furious assault on reason, Gore extended an olive branch. "We've got a mutual friend in Doug Coe," he told Inhofe. "I'd love to have breakfast with you. Just the three of us, without cameras and lights, and tell you why I feel so strongly about this."

Unlike most of the media, which generally reported this exchange without comment, you might be wondering who Doug Coe is, what type of man could serve as the peaceful mediator between two such implacable opponents. If your first guess is that he must be some kind of businessman—the type of visionary CEO who all too frequently manages to forge the Beltway's beloved "bipartisan consensus"—well, you're half-right.

As journalist and religious scholar Jeff Sharlet explains in his new investigative exposé-slash-history, *The Family: The Secret Fundamentalism at the Heart of American Power* (HarperCollins, May), Coe is a spiritual adviser who heads a self-described "invisible" association of (almost all male) judges, oil executives, military contractors and political leaders, both foreign and domestic. Known as the

Family—or alternately, the Fellowship—the group's ostensible purpose is to regularly bring three or four such powerful "key men" together in "prayer cells." The goal, in the words of a confidential mission statement that Sharlet has unearthed, is to realize their common "desire to see a leadership led by God."

To crib writer Upton Sinclair: "This is no fairy tale and no joke." In a journalistic coup, Sharlet managed to score an invite to live at the Family's compound on a tree-lined cul-de-sac in Arlington, Va., for a month. By his count, at least 11 current U.S. senators are considered Family "members," including Inhofe, Sam Brownback (R-Kans.), Bill Nelson (D-Fla.) and Mark Pryor (D-Ark.). (The Family considers many others, like Sen. Hillary Clinton, to be "friends.")

Past U.S. members include the late Sen. Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.), the late Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist and former Defense Secretary Melvin Laird, while some of the foreign dignitaries welcomed into its prayer cells include such charming monsters as Indonesian leader Gen. Suharto, Somali dicta-

tor Siad Barre and Salvadoran Gen. Carlos Eugenio Vides Casanova, who a Florida jury held liable in 2002 for the torture of a science teacher, a physician and a church worker during that country's civil war.

As you can probably imagine, the God who leads such blood-splattered "leadership" isn't a bushy-bearded fella who gazes benevolently down upon us from the clouds. Or rather, he's not *only* that. Indeed, one of the main characteristics of the Family's bizarre theology is its flexibility, which can be maintained because of its all-encompassing conception of Jesus.

"Jesus plus nothing" is how Sharlet overhears Coe describe the philosophy during one of his "mentoring" sessions with a congressman. The implication is that of a "total Jesus," who is everywhere, involved in all things and all actions, and who holds dominion over all things and actions.

For those who accept this, the next logical step is the recognition that everything that exists—the status quo (or what Coe calls the "social order")—is perfect. (It's all Jesus, after all.) The only exceptions to this perfect cosmogony are those who

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

THE RISE AND (RELATIVE) FALL OF STUPIDITY IN AMERICA

EVENTUALLY, HOWEVER, PEOPLE BEGAN TO NOTICE THAT STUPIDITY WASN'T WORKING OUT VERY WELL. THE ECONOMY'S GONE TO HELL, THE CONSTITUTION'S BEEN SHREDDED, AND WE'RE APPARENTLY NEVER GETTING OUT OF IRAQ.

MAYBE LETTING STUPID PEOPLE RUN EVERYTHING WASN'T SUCH A GOOD IDEA.

AFTER 9/11, STUPIDITY BECAME PATRIOTIC.

BAD THING HAPPEN! US GO KILL PEOPLE NOW!

US SHOW WORLD WHO AM BOSS!

IT AM ONLY THING TO DO!

AND NOW, AFTER SEVEN YEARS OF RELENTLESS STUPIDITY, NON-STUPID PEOPLE ARE FINALLY BEGINNING TO ASSERT THEIR NON-STUPIDITY--WITHIN REASONABLE LIMITS, OBVIOUSLY...

SHOULDN'T A PRESIDENT WHO AUTHORIZED TORTURE AND ILLEGAL WIRETAPPING BE SUBJECT TO--AH--

--MILD EXPRESSIONS OF DIS-APPROVAL? ABSOLUTELY!

OH--RIGHT! WE DON'T WANT TO GET CARRIED AWAY!

FOR SEVERAL YEARS, ANYONE WHO QUESTIONED STUPIDITY WAS INSULTED AND MALIGNED (THOUGH NOT VERY CLEVERLY, OF COURSE)...

YOU DO REALIZE THAT IRAQ HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH 9/11--?

YOU AM AMERICA-HATING TRAITOR WHO AM PROBABLY HOMOSEXUAL!

WHY YOU HATE BRAVE TROOPS?!

BUT SOONER OR LATER, STUPIDITY WILL STAGE A COMEBACK.

NEW BAD THING HAPPEN! US GO KILL MORE PEOPLE NOW!

AND US FURTHER DISREGARD BASIC PRINCIPLES WHICH ALLEGEDLY DEFINE US AS A PEOPLE!

IT AM ONLY THING TO DO!

TOM TOMORROW © 2008... www.thismodernworld.com

fail to fully embrace God's social order.

"If God is dead, then everything is permitted," Fyodor Dostoevsky once wrote. But if God is everything, then everything is still permitted, *so long as it's done in the name of God*. And when everything is permitted, one section of society is going to come out ahead: the powerful.

Ultimately, Sharlet concludes, it's power that is the *sine qua non* of the Family, and the powerful who are its ministered. And that has always been the case.

Sharlet traces the roots of the Family to its founder (and Coe's predecessor as its head), a Norwegian immigrant named Abram Vereide who arrived in the United States in 1905. Vereide ended up in the Pacific Northwest, where he built up a modestly successful evangelical ministry. Though he had rather instrumentalist ideas about the masses—seeing them, Sharlet writes, as "blocks to be arranged neatly"—he nevertheless sought to provide them charity in the traditional vein of the "Social Gospel" that applies Christian ethics to social problems.

But in the mid-'30s, Vereide watched in horror as boisterous labor battles exploded on the streets of San Francisco and Seattle. In Sharlet's telling, Vereide was particularly haunted by the longshoremen's leader, Harry Bridges, who combined the organizing of the Reds with the playful, anti-dogmatism of the Wobblies. Sharlet sees the two men as perfect foils, "utopians in the American vein... [who] both believed in power. [But] Bridges wanted to see it redistributed. Abram wanted to see it concentrated."

Abram began doing so by holding prayer meetings with Seattle's wealthiest industrialists, whose station in life was evidence to Abram that they were "top men," chosen by God to rule. Out of one such meeting came the top men's chosen mayoral candidate, Arthur Langlie, a flirter with fascism who ran on a platform of punishing vice, cutting taxes, slashing budgets and letting the free market take care of the rest. He managed to win, after the liberal-left vote split between two candidates. Sound familiar?

Sharlet traces the rest of the Family's history from there, documenting its dalliances with ex-Nazi businessmen after WWII and its embrace of some of the

excerpt



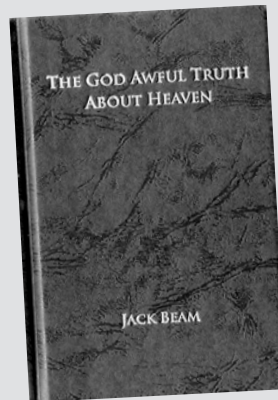
THE REV. TELETUBBY'S HOLY HEAVEN—AND HELL

Jack Beam's book, *The God Awful Truth About Heaven* (Flanders Fields Press, 2008), asks the question, "How did Jesus describe Heaven?" Beam documents how those who call themselves "devout Christians" return vacant stares.

Christianity has given birth to crusades, pogroms, pre-emptive wars and touchdowns for Jesus. But when it comes to that eternal question in the sky, "How did their God describe heaven?" Christians haven't a holy clue. ...

Ask any person who claims to be a Christian to describe heaven. Movies and TV will come to mind, followed by images of art and literature for those who have ever heard of Dante, Milton, or spent time hanging around the Uffizi or the Sistine Chapel. Some will get around to quoting Daniel, Revelations or some other non-gospel. Some may borrow from biblical commentary of such human authority on heaven as Tim LaHaye—the L. Ron Hubbard of Christianity. When pressed about what heaven will be like, most Christian believers will answer tautologically, "You just got to believe."

Contrary to what Jesus preached about waiting until—thy Kingdom come, the Second coming, the Parousia—for resurrection to heaven, when Jerry Falwell died he went express. The homophobic preacher did not do what the Bible "told him so." Falwell miraculously circumvented the delay set forth in sacred scripture. According to Falwell's eulogist, that perfect picture of pompous piety and gluttony took a shuttle directly to heaven and did not have to wait in his coffin until the Parousia.



"[A]nd about the time the gates of glory swung open and the bells of heaven begin to ring and the King's trumpeters begin to blast, 10,000 welcomes and angels line the streets and the saints of God welcomed him and they rejoice, welcome to heaven Falwell, you have fought a good fight."

When Enron's Ken Lay died, the *London Evening Standard* reported that after comparing him to Martin Luther King and Jesus, the eulogists at his funeral declared that the man who escaped his felony conviction by dying was in heaven.

What is heaven like, Kenny Boy? What is heaven like, Rev. Teletubby? How would you all describe it?

worst dictators of the late 20th century.

The Family is an ambitious book—perhaps at times overly so—and an argumentative one, making persuasive cases about the longevity and appeal of U.S. fundamentalism and rendering shrewd analyses about its elite and populist branches.

But one of Sharlet's arguments hasn't received sufficient attention: his indictment of the Cold War liberal establishment for making common cause with these elite fundamentalists when doing so would serve its imperial foreign policy aims. Abroad, fighting the godless Communists

with these "allies" left hundreds of thousands of civilians dead in Vietnam, Indonesia and throughout Central and South America. Meanwhile, the same allies at home slowly ate away at liberalism's own pillars of secularism and economic fairness, eroding them to the point of collapse.

Which brings us back to Gore's visit to the Senate. If Gore ever wonders why so many politicians seem so unreasonable when it comes to acknowledging and acting to stop global warming, perhaps he should take a closer look at his "friend" Doug Coe—and in the mirror, at himself. ■

BY TERRY J. ALLEN

Change We Can Reasonably Assess



THE BUMPER
STICKER
“Vote
Obama:

Be disappointed by
someone new” sums
up a wave of disillusion
with the Democratic
nominee.

Initially, Barack

Obama seemed the rare politician with the guts and vision to shred failed systems and to develop solutions that transcend quick fixes and political expediency. But as the campaign progresses, the senator is morphing into a conventional, if exceptionally charismatic, political animal. Whether his calibrated stances are evidence of savvy or traditional Democratic sell-out centrism remains to be seen.

Yet neither Obama’s rhetoric of hope nor John McCain’s folksy belligerence will solve 21st century problems: escalating economic crises, rising food and fuel prices, global warming, the dangers of Christian and Islamic fundamentalism, the vast wealth gap, crumbling infrastructures, and failed treaties and regulatory mechanisms.

A sustainable future requires America to radically redefine security from winning the “war on terror” and maintaining global dominance to becoming an international partner.

Sadly, while advocating negotiations, Obama still invokes outdated national security models based on military might. For example, he wants to cut troop levels in Iraq only to redeploy them to a different illegal and doomed war—in Afghanistan. Aside from that country’s centuries-honed knack for swallowing invading armies, Afghanistan offers well-

armed warlords, endemic corruption, narco-trafficking and a border with Pakistan—an unstable nuclear power whose interests conflict with both Washington and Kabul. Afghanistan is no more a good war, and no less a stupid one, than Bush’s war in Iraq.

But while appearing soft on defense is a political third rail, there are policy areas where Obama could stand for systemic reform without risking political death. One is the fatally compromised bureaucracies that use censored science to bring us dangerous food, drugs and safety standards. (See “Feeding the Beast,” page 32.)

An egregious example of the manipulation of science is climate change—a threat that rivals terrorism. The Bush administration has suppressed and manipulated hard evidence of potentially disastrous fluctuations and how they will impact public health.

In 2007, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) created a devastating 14-page report, “Climate Change and Public Health.” Vice President Dick Cheney’s office altered and redacted it to six bland pages.

Gone were warnings in the original version that climate change is “a serious public health concern” that will trigger air pollution-related health effects, allergic and chronic diseases, water- and food-borne infectious diseases, vector-borne and zoonotic diseases, food and water scarcity, mental health problems and death.

The pre-censored report said the consequences of climate change-related events—such as hurricanes and floods—would “range from loss of life and acute trauma, to indirect effects such as loss of homes, large-scale population displacement, damage to

drinking water and sewage systems, interruption of food production, damage to the healthcare infrastructure, and psychological problems such as post traumatic stress disorder.”

The original also predicted that the greatest harm would fall on the elderly, children, people with chronic conditions, migrant populations, “people of lower socioeconomic status” and “members of racial and ethnic minority groups.”

Pretty strong stuff.

The redacted version was considerably more cheerful. Delivered to Congress and defended by CDC head Julie Gerberding, it omitted even the dry fact that “scientific evidence supports the view that the earth’s climate is changing.”

If McCain is elected, the best we can expect is different high-level hacks in thrall to the same industries and politics. Obama will certainly do better. But what is in doubt, especially given his embrace of a 20th century military strategy in Afghanistan, is whether he has sacrificed, on the altar of electability, the guts and vision that thrust him to prominence in the first place.

“I’m asking you to believe,” reads the headline on Obama’s website.

And that is the beginning of the problem. Belief belongs in church; good policy rests on facts, clear thinking and evidence.

Sure, science doesn’t have all the answers, but until Obama commits to reason over belief; facts over ideology; realistic assessments over hope; science over political expediency, he will likely disappoint.

But, yeah, he will do it with style. ■

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Guns and Race

Continued from back page

with their own armed militias. During the brief period of Reconstruction, they even did so with the backing of the federal government.

But the balance swung fatally back in the favor of whites following the 1873 Colfax Massacre. The massacre—which began with a contested election in Grant Parish, La., and left more than 100 blacks dead—is remembered less for its violence than for its legal aftermath. When local authorities declined to proffer murder charges, the federal government indicted 98 people, arguing that because the whites used violence to disarm the blacks, they were guilty of violating their Second Amendment rights.

The case, *U.S. v. Cruikshank*, reached the Supreme Court in 1876. The justices determined that “bearing arms for a lawful purpose is not a right granted by the Constitution,” and that the Second Amendment “has no other effect than to restrict the power of the national government.”

The high court further decreed that the 14th Amendment “prohibits a State from depriving any person of life, liberty, of property, without due process of law; but this adds nothing to the rights of one citizen as against another.”

In effect, the high court sided with organized and armed whites against the black population, and determined that the Constitution did nothing to establish or protect the rights of blacks against the violence of whites. *Cruikshank* practically marked the end of Reconstruction.

Over the course of the following century, the court slowly recognized that the Bill of Rights limited state—as well as federal—intrusion, and civil rights legislation made individual violations actionable. Somehow the right to bear arms was left behind.

Gun regulations continued to be drafted, passed and enforced in ways that selectively disarmed the poor and people of color.

In *Watson v. Stone* (1941), the Florida Supreme Court overturned the gun conviction of a white man. Justice Rivers Buford wrote in his concurring opinion: “The Act was passed for the purpose of disarming

negro laborers. ... [It] was never intended to be applied to the white population and in practice has never been so applied.”

A quarter century later, in 1967, California passed its Panther Law, with the specific aim of ending the Black Panthers’ armed patrols against police brutality.

White supremacy has refined its presentation since the civil rights period,

ized prosecutions, increased policing in poor neighborhoods and other so-called tough-on-crime policies that disproportionately affect people of color.

The race-coded rhetoric stresses keeping guns out of the hands of “criminals” while respecting the rights of “responsible, law-abiding” gun owners—especially “hunters” and “collectors.”

Many gun regulations—such as bans on guns in housing projects and laws that take the cheapest pistols off the market—have continued to disproportionately affect people of color.

relying increasingly on nominally color-blind laws. Yet many gun regulations—bans on guns in housing projects and laws that take the cheapest pistols off the market, for example—have continued to disproportionately affect people of color.

The recent *D.C. v. Heller* will likely discredit some of those laws, but not all. Most significantly, even though the court found an individual right to bear arms, it explicitly refused to extend that right to people who have been convicted of a crime.

There’s a common-sense appeal to denying guns to criminals—if it is assumed that “criminals” constitute a static and readily identifiable class of people. In practice, such policies are a handy way of institutionalizing racism.

The police pay disproportionate attention to people of color, so many of those people are more likely to have criminal records—which are used, with circular logic, to justify more scrutiny. With more scrutiny and less leeway, people who have already been to prison are more likely to return, often on some technicality like a parole violation. Thus the criminal justice system serves, not just as a means of punishing crime, but also as a legal mechanism for stripping people of color of their basic rights. Given that most states use the justice system to deny people of color the vote, it shouldn’t be surprising that they use it to deny them guns as well.

This is the type of gun control that the National Rifle Association (NRA) endorses. The organization has consistently supported mandatory sentences, federal-

In the current context, the dispute between “liberal” gun-control proponents and “conservative” gun-rights advocates is a sustained disagreement about the relationship between armed whites and the government.

Many liberals trust the state to respect the rights of individuals and to protect them against crime and disorder. They see no role for private gun ownership under the rule of law.

Many conservatives retain some suspicion of government regulation and don’t believe the state capable of protecting decent law-abiding people. They see gun ownership both as an emblem of citizenship and as a protection against those they view as criminals—historically, blacks and, at present, immigrants.

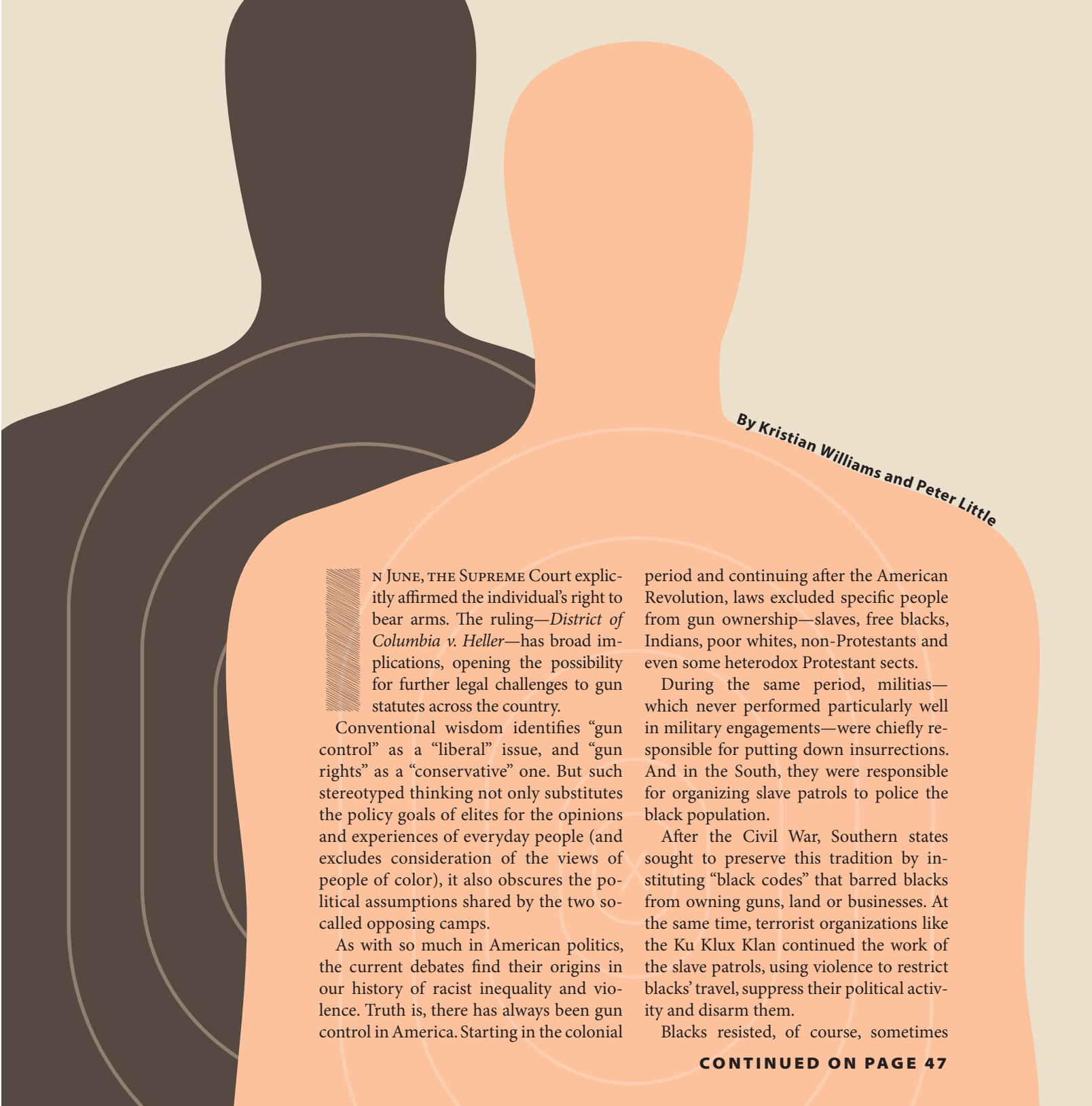
The disagreement is over who should have guns.

The point of agreement is over who shouldn’t.

As presently construed, both the gun-control and the gun-rights arguments—that is, both the liberal and the conservative positions—represent the defense of white supremacy. ■

KRISTIAN WILLIAMS is the author of *Our Enemies in Blue: Police and Power in America and American Methods: Torture and the Logic of Domination* (both from South End Press.)

PETER LITTLE is a member of *Bring the Ruckus*, an anti-capitalist organization, and an advocate of abolition democracy.



By Kristian Williams and Peter Little

IN JUNE, THE SUPREME COURT explicitly affirmed the individual's right to bear arms. The ruling—*District of Columbia v. Heller*—has broad implications, opening the possibility for further legal challenges to gun statutes across the country.

Conventional wisdom identifies “gun control” as a “liberal” issue, and “gun rights” as a “conservative” one. But such stereotyped thinking not only substitutes the policy goals of elites for the opinions and experiences of everyday people (and excludes consideration of the views of people of color), it also obscures the political assumptions shared by the two so-called opposing camps.

As with so much in American politics, the current debates find their origins in our history of racist inequality and violence. Truth is, there has always been gun control in America. Starting in the colonial

period and continuing after the American Revolution, laws excluded specific people from gun ownership—slaves, free blacks, Indians, poor whites, non-Protestants and even some heterodox Protestant sects.

During the same period, militias—which never performed particularly well in military engagements—were chiefly responsible for putting down insurrections. And in the South, they were responsible for organizing slave patrols to police the black population.

After the Civil War, Southern states sought to preserve this tradition by instituting “black codes” that barred blacks from owning guns, land or businesses. At the same time, terrorist organizations like the Ku Klux Klan continued the work of the slave patrols, using violence to restrict blacks’ travel, suppress their political activity and disarm them.

Blacks resisted, of course, sometimes

CONTINUED ON PAGE 47

TALKING ABOUT GUNS, FIGHTING ABOUT RACE